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POEMS OF  
PERSONALITY

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REGINALD C. ROBBINS





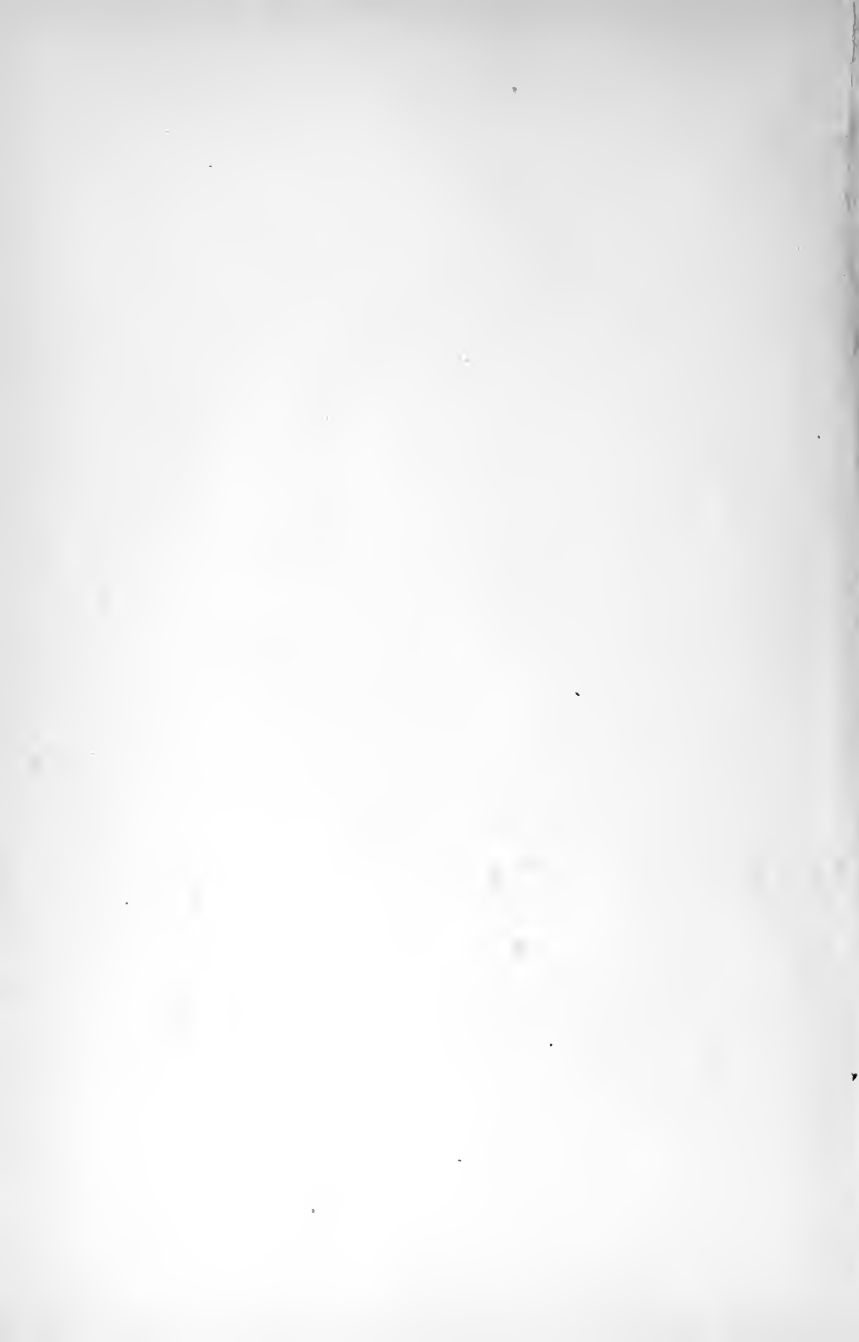
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OF  
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REGINALD C. ROBBINS

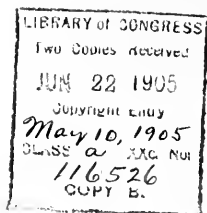


—“*to speak beyond the book*”



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## POEMS OF PERSONALITY



## PHARAOH

YEA, now at last to let this people go !  
Out from our cities and our fertile lands  
To drive them to the deserts and their death !  
Truly a terrible revenge, to thrust  
Them forth to sure starvation at their prayer !  
Yea, for I loved them as a Pharaoh may,  
This people prating of their Most High God,  
And pitied them and fain had cherish'd them  
To build me temples, rear me granaries  
Even as in days of Ramses : him, the Great.  
Then came their sorceries of flies and frogs  
To torment Egypt. And I still forbore  
And bound them to me as a Pharaoh may  
Firm for protection from the false purport  
Of Moses and of Aaron whom I loved not.  
Fain had I saved them, ay, and still forbore  
For love I bore them : being myself their God,  
Descendant of the Sun, Lord over all !

Ha ! do they dream, if that my father, Ra,  
Favors my favor'd in this fertile land,  
He will be other than a blistering flame

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

To scourge them through the bitter wilderness ?  
Nay, shall He not bewilder those He blinds not  
With fever-fancies of some towering cloud  
By day, some phantom of His flame by night  
To lure them madly further to their doom  
Ever beneath His mightiness the more  
With each day's wandering southward, till the crags  
Of Sinai mock with laughter the last wail  
Of them who perish miserably, seeking  
A northern country and a shepherd clime ?  
A terrible revenge which I, the son  
Of Ra the mighty, wreak on Israel now !  
I had forborne ; but when my first-born fell,  
My favorite child, to their foul sorceries  
Then did the wrath of Pharaoh sneer at last :  
'Unto their God now let this people go !' —  
And they are gone. As journeying birds at morning  
Settle upon the temples and through noon  
Bless all the priestly place with beauty, but  
By evening are flown wholly away ;  
And Amen's princely home glooms desolate :  
So are this folk from Goshen gone away —  
Themselves unto their doom : as birds in some  
Fierce tempest of the northern ocean fall



## PHARAOH

Broken and beaten back throughout our coasts. —  
Shall I permit that those my love hath rear'd  
And nurtured to be builders unto Ra  
Shall to the sorceries of one or two  
Fall sacrifice ? Or shall I save them still ?  
Shall the east sea rebuff the last of them  
Struggling toward Egypt ; that they die along  
His shores in hundreds, calling on my name ?  
Or shall the God in me regard them still  
My children, though my first-born be no more ?

As they are men, are they not men like me ?  
As I am God, are they perchance not gods  
My children, godlike as mine own first-born ?  
Was my wrath man-like, god-like ? Was my grief  
Worthy of Pharaoh that I sought to slay  
My people by ten-thousands ? I will still  
Be Pharaoh, child of Ra, lord over all  
My people, equally with them divine ! —

“ Call me my captains ! Hale my chariots forth  
“ And bowmen ! I will bring this people back ! ”

## MOSES

THIS people ! Is it thus I led them forth  
From bondage to be free ? Yea, is it thus ?  
Doth Egypt, Egypt bind us, though these sands  
Of God's great desert be our lodging-place  
And fetters and their flesh-pots are no more ?  
Yea, is it thus ? That freedom needs a law ;  
And I, alone from out that multitude  
Of idol-worshippers who once were slaves  
Yet servants also of the Most High God,  
That I alone must meet God face to face  
In His high mountain to be messenger  
Of uttermost authority : and now  
Stand, fresh from God's strength, stricken of despair  
Here statue-still upon this stark hillside ?  
Lo ! and the tablets of the absolute Law  
Destroy'd, dropt shatter'd from mine hand ; and all  
This speechless blue and death-strewn silent crag  
Echoing to the fragments, bit by bit,  
That burst and, bursting, hurl down unto dust !  
Now shall I front this people and be dumb ?  
I : who went forth at the command of God  
To learn God's purpose and proclaim it to them ?

## MOSES

Yea, shall I front them ? Or, once more, face God's  
Eternal patience ? . . . Are we fit for Him ?

Fain would I feel : ' Because God chooseth us,  
' Are we, His people, holy and most fit  
' Unto the privilege He layeth on us ' ;  
Fain would be slave unto the Most High God :  
But shall be servant, wisely reasoning of Him  
And of His patience, His authority,  
And whether we be worthy. That I know  
Before this hour of my temptation pass  
I shall be faithful and confirm'd to seek  
Anew Jehovah, saying to Him : ' Lord,  
Again give Thy commandments ' ; that I know me  
For still His servant, scarce releaseth me  
From need to prove and comprehend how God  
Can take for His, servants who need command ;  
Slaves who can yield no service save for task !  
Is God task-master and no God of Love ?  
Then were He Pharaoh, and we further from Him  
By every journeying in the wilderness ;  
His pillar of fire by night, of cloud by day  
Some false god's ; ay, this exodus a lapse  
Unto idolatry ; as now I see it

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Below me in the plain accursedly !  
Then, yea, were it false that men might e'er be call'd  
A chosen people : for the chosen of God  
Were then His bond-slaves, strangers most from  
Him !

Nay, God hath said : ' Ye are my chosen people '.  
And He hath led us forth from Pharaoh's power  
To be no longer bond-slaves. Wherefore God  
Is no task-master, but a God of Love !  
Whence, then, this need of law unto our love ?  
Whence this relapse and infidelity ;  
My sacrilege, impatience ? How may we so  
Transform God to a seeming task-master  
If fit to be the chosen of a God  
Who hath no bond-slaves, nay ; but freeth us ?  
Lieth the fault not in us none the less  
While yet by wonder we are worthy still ?  
Pray'd not I once unto the Most High God —  
' Dismiss Thy servant, Lord ; for what am I  
' To bear the burden of Thy high command  
' To lay on Pharaoh ? Who am I to be  
' God unto Pharaoh as Thy word hath said ?  
' Wherefore, I pray Thee, Lord, dismiss me now

## MOSES

‘ And give Thy word to one more fit for Thee ! ’ —  
Blaspheming. For Jehovah, for a sign,  
Wither’d mine hand within my bosom, turning  
The flesh more leprous than these sands ; but then  
Restored it whole as any flesh : to show  
By miracle how, though He knew, as none  
Of Israel might know, my leprousness,  
He yet would make of me an holy thing ;  
Laying a task on me, though God of Love !  
Then when at last this people lay encamp’d  
By the Red Sea ; and Pharaoh’s host drew nigh  
To threaten all with vengeance : that this folk  
Lost heart, blaspheming how the graves of God  
Were narrower than Egypt’s ; did not He  
Stretch a great cloud along the coasts by night  
And part the waters with a wild east wind  
From off the shallow places of the sea  
To let His children pass unseen ; till God  
Open’d the eyes of Pharaoh but too late  
And caught him with returning of the sea  
Betwixt two waters, him and all his hosts ;  
And saved us : meaning by the miracle  
How though He knew our human helplessness  
Who fail’d to trust His help before the world,

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

He yet would save us to be helpmate to Him !  
Wherefore is God in us as we in Him :  
Eternal miracle of trust and worth :  
We worthy of the trust we wholly need.

By miracle ? By nature ! As we are men,  
To fail from faith ; as we are God-in-us,  
To be His people, leading on and on  
A light unto the nations and a triumph  
In each endeavor ; as the way of God  
Is to be Father to His folk that fail !  
For how else were He God ? How else were  
men? —

Therefore need I in nothing now deny  
Our absolute unfitness to be God's  
Great chosen people : mine unfitness for  
This life-long privilege of speech with God.  
For in my sacrilege and mute despair  
At these idolatries, I feel how God  
Works wondrously unto the knowledge of God  
In me and wisdom of His ways with men.  
That freedom needs a law and is no love,  
Shall mean in God's good time a Law of Love  
Unto our helpfulness. Whence are we now

## MOSES

God's nearest, fit unto the task we find ;  
And therefore chosen of the God of Love. —  
Wherefore, to God again ; and say : ' Once more,  
' Lord, grant us Thy commands, which I destroy'd.'

## GAUTAMA

THE night is solemn and the mind awake :  
Calm, yea, and almost wholly passionless.  
The myriad-glistening blackness of these boughs,  
Image of insight, calleth silently  
To contemplation whilst my limbs repose  
Beneath their canopy and rest with them —  
The myriad glistening of the glow-fly still  
Like thought that rests not though the body lies  
Along earth as the limbs of those who sleep,  
My comrades at my feet who learn of me.  
Though these friends sleep and are at peace as  
    dead,  
I sleep not but must muse until the dawn,  
When time shall be that action be resumed : —  
Action, ay, nowise consonant with peace. —

Nay, then, if life be passion and they be,  
The passions, wholly evil, how prevail  
(Being a living thing) to work aught good ?  
If all be false whereof we are aware  
(And only therefore meriting contempt —  
The things of sense and feelings form'd of them),



## GAUTAMA

How can the truth be anywise attain'd  
Save in annihilation? And to cease  
Wholly hath never been mine aim to teach. —  
How might a man conceive that he should cease,  
Save as by sleep whence even these blest awake?  
And how conceive continuance without sense  
Of individual being still maintain'd?  
There is no soul continuing through death  
Indeed; yet Karma haply were some soul  
To those enlighten'd who perceive past births,  
And otherwise might hardly operate  
To yield identity to several forms.  
Yet is the broad assertion full believed  
(Oft have I taught it, falsely as I fear!)  
Of depravation and delusiveness  
Which wholly true would transcend remedy  
By contradicting any self-felt truth,  
Standard of good or cosmic objective.  
And my philosophy (as men construct  
My doctrine and require consistency  
Of system, I as seer have ne'er discern'd!) —  
My form'd philosophy were nothing save  
All thought be nothingness — although my thought  
Belies the asseveration! To assert

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Aught, should disprove my creed of nescience,  
Of peace by contemplation wholly void.  
Therefore am I two teachers ; and my word  
Some duplex half-truth ; and the world I leave  
Unto these faithful (followers of me  
Here sleeping at my feet through the soft night),  
A strife irreconcilable between  
Theory and practice as the night and day !  
Lo ! if the night's denial of the day  
Be ultimate, then shall they never wake  
To dawning, nor might this my musing be  
A vigil of the truth — how can be practice  
Where theory denies ? The night still means  
The coming morn, as sense though wholly false  
Implieth an intelligence of sense  
Not void but individual as I ponder.  
I taught not truth — that so shall practice be  
Hollow pretense and theory be proved  
Itself sham and delusion : that my creed  
Be subtlest source of false establishment  
In faith, as likewise in vacuity  
Of conduct striving still toward emptiness.  
Shall I allow that day, my noble path,  
Shall be resumed unreconciled with aught

## GAUTAMA

The serious night and vigil thus profound  
Have taught me of truth consonant with Self?

I can conceive a rule of faith not mine  
Yet still renunciative (still of night  
The peace-bringer in silence!), based in truth  
Of mutual compassion as mine own  
Though nowise seeking thus to annihilate  
As I all passion whence compassion comes.  
Lo! for, behold! if sympathy be good  
(If there be balm of night even in day),  
Itself the highest good in all the world  
(Strange contradiction of soul-turpitude!),  
Even as my doctrine teaches, then the world  
Is leaven'd by compassion whilst, without  
World, would the highest good whereof we know  
Be lost for substitution of the void:  
The vanity of sleep, in place of peace  
By comprehension as I wait the day.  
I cannot yield to nothingness a world  
Of whose fate I am still compassionate —  
Valuing compassion as best cause of peace!  
I with a world to save must still redeem  
Myself by means of that virtue alone

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Of sympathy which hath been seed and source  
Of all my ministry ! I seem to feel  
A meaning wherein sympathy, not death,  
Not riddance of this individual life,  
Achieves salvation, universalizing  
By an identity of distinctive selves  
The lone-lost microcosm : how the day  
Of insight, ay, in action saveth man  
Day's creature ; not recourse unto the night  
Of moveless contemplation. Can the world  
Anywhere, anywise contain a man  
Who fearlessly shall face as I faced not  
The loss and pain, the single loneliness ;  
Alleviating all the sin of the world  
Not by abandoning the concrete good  
But suffering good in evil ? In some least  
By my renunciation have I thrust  
Evil upon myself and thus done good  
As by compassion ; and have thus deserved  
Haply not that absorption in the All  
My heart hath pray'd for, but some new re-birth  
Even in a clime and age where I may show  
Some practical divinity of man,  
Some steadfastness in insight sympathizing,

## GAUTAMA

Yea, to the death : that I be born again !  
Methinks I see me, not enthroned on high  
In endless musing aimlessly maintain'd  
For lack of any purport, but aloft  
In suffering rear'd upon a torture-throne ;  
And then anon beneath some charnel-hole  
Buried that I may rive and rise again  
Re-born within all men and be as God  
A savior and a spirit by sympathy  
Nobly maintain'd through sharing of all woes  
In self-appreciation : that all men  
(Not by annihilation of their woe  
With self ; scarce by escape, but acclamation !)  
Shall feel their solidarity with God  
Even through my ministration. And at length  
Shall the apostles of that last god-birth  
Enlighten these my followers of this first :  
And be themselves enlighten'd by contact  
With rumor of this earlier mysticism.  
For they in turn through ages shall have lost  
The first fresh personal cognizance of God  
Within, believing only that I died  
(I the world-passionate of the later days)  
To save mankind ; not that men, each, are saved

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

By personal compassion as was I.  
Whence in the contact of the alien creeds  
Shall haply spring regenerance of both : —  
Faith founded as my present faith is founded  
In individual potency to be  
(No matter how) all that we know of God ;  
Yet form'd no more in Nescience for a Way  
Nor in denial of God-personism :  
A faith form'd as my future faith shall be  
In passionate activity of self  
Instating and instated of the time  
And place for action, not (as in their faith  
Of ages after me) declaring truth  
To be of time and place not theirs but mine  
Only (forgetful that my life and theirs  
Are one in selfness and divinity).  
Haply a third — were it conclusive ? — birth  
In guise of him who not with parable  
But with convincing logic may construct  
The scheme of such a world of godly men !  
(Ah ! but the beauty of a forthright proof  
To faith, yielding consistence, self-support  
And system to truth arbitrary else !)  
Haply a million births, each yielding truth

## GAUTAMA

In some new words but never losing grasp  
(After the Two who spake in me half-truths —  
Two half-truths now ; two half-truths now and  
then —

Have once been reconciled within the Third !)  
Of the divinity of sufferance,  
The world-salvation of compassioning,  
The nothingness of any life beyond  
A world, like this, of limit and of change ! —  
Ha ! and, behold ! the glimmering of the dawn  
Responsive to the vision of that Day,  
The holy passion that possesses me.  
I will awake these sleepers and proclaim  
The new-won insight of the truth to-come ! —

Nay, but, alas ! what if the limit be  
(Even as this night, ere birth of day, must die  
Despite their mutual interpreting)  
Also a final ; and my life (man-god,  
Yea, though I am) be now a final life  
Fill'd with its half-truth, and the nobler half  
Be never mine : be his, that later Man ?  
How might I then announce this failure to them ?  
Though self can cease not, neither be absorb'd

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Unto Nirvana (an Nirvana be  
Annihilation!) yet perchance self were  
Complete, made total by the stint of deed  
Perform'd 'twixt birth and death (how, I know  
not ;

Lacking a logic for the fact I feel!) ? —  
Lo ! even then were my half-truth the whole  
Of some fulfillment. (Hath not even this night,  
That dieth ere the day, proclaim'd to me  
Day's healing nighthood?) — In this world of pain  
The pain of being finally fulfill'd  
In self-acknowledged error ! That my name,  
Believed-on, shall breed nescience and a creed  
Of practical observance without rule  
Or check to superstition ; and, so far  
As truth is known of me, to be condemn'd  
As worst of the world's failures, who would save  
But could not : saved himself, but not the world ! —  
The night dies back, the day advanceth, dread  
And passionate, unwitting of the ways  
Of insight, cruel beyond sympathy ;  
And calling on me to maintain that creed  
Men comprehend of peace by nescience !  
Did I declare the vision, I 'd achieve



## GAUTAMA

Truth to myself by sacrificing hope  
To save the world. Behold ! be the world saved  
Though in my heart I know my life hath fail'd !—

But, then, if life be evil, how not fail ?

## CHRIST

WHAT were the purpose of a proud reply  
Unto these priests ? They know not what they do.  
Yet, whilst they still talk on, must I in soul  
Answer 'before my father', yea, for me  
Their witnessing : ay, is it false or no ?  
Now, while the tumult of their questioners  
Is fiercest, while the insult and the shame  
Shelter me with impenetrable hate  
As from the love of any man of men,  
May I, unwarp'd of too much passioning  
For pity of these people, weigh at last  
Worth of my ministry, ay, estimate  
Wherein this outcome I have long foreseen  
Were fair and fortunate, crowning with rich  
Accomplishment ; wherein 't were inwardly  
As openly a failure ! Let me be now  
Passionless as this cup is passionate ;  
Yet, as no Pharisee of all, a soul  
Alive with comprehension of the loves  
And hates of men ; their clings to old truths  
Grown stale and false ; their yearnings still for new  
They scarce may understand : hence not for them

## CHRIST

Ripe truth : I among men a man, like these  
Not ripe to understand, cleaving to false  
Even for the need of men's companionship  
By ministry ; yea, for the teaching's sake  
Which fails from truth by every stale-meant word  
Half-wantonly meeting the times' demand. —  
Nay, Caiaphas, no compromise from now ;  
No failure more from truth by any word  
Meant to be understood. I have found  
How men miscomprehend ; and still have told  
Nothing of my best message unto men.  
Now let my death atone ; for sins of men  
As my sin let this crucifixion come  
For my full meaning and companionship  
In ministry no man need understand  
To comprehend its purport to be true.  
But, lo ! (how safe this uproar shuts me in  
Out of the sight and sound of all whose ears  
And eyes would fain have open'd !) how did I  
For zeal and pity yield a leading where  
The light could scarcely enter. All seem'd truth  
Even as I spake it ; image seem'd the fact ;  
Figure, the message. For I loved men so.  
Now is the figure forsworn for the fact ;

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Image, despoil'd of vision, witness'd forth  
In guise of ministry. Yea, is their speech  
False-witness? Father, or have I proved false?—  
Nay, not from now! Only, let thought rehearse  
The history: what was; what should have been.

So, Caiaphas, speak thou whilst silently  
I weigh thine accusations. Let them swear  
Their false truths: I will take upon my life  
Their falsehood, to attain unto their truth  
Of inmost self-belief even by my death;  
Not otherwise. — So, they accuse me here  
Of sundry blasphemies. Have I blasphemed?  
Scarce by intention. Yet I grant them truth  
Of plausible misinterpretations. I  
Spake but in parable, for want of words  
To meet their outworn ways of speech, yet speak  
The new truth utterly. I gave them stones  
For bread: the bread, how should they eat of it?—  
So, I have 'stirr'd sedition', counseling  
No reverence for priests' authority!  
What was my word? 'Blind leaders of the blind';  
'Wolves in sheep's clothing'. Did I mean or nay?  
Father, 'mid this serenity of hate

## CHRIST

(Love-perspicacity of inwardness),  
Which shields me round (concludes within my will  
An infinite use) from any need to serve  
Too sympathizingly the blind and wolves,  
Find I the fact-interpretation: these  
Blind but by plenitude of light in me,  
Wolves but by my full innocence of harm;  
I still by figure of the fact, by so  
Refusing self-responsibility  
Of imputation, equally with them  
Blind leader, wolf-destroyer of the fold:  
Such for the figure. Save the new truth come  
Despoiling old, remains old error truth;  
Save the old error stay to be gainsaid,  
How were the truth not-false? And I had meant:  
I find them blind and wolves who save for me  
Had been light-leaders, guardians of the fold:  
I thereby blind and wolf; they, through my truth  
Proved of their falsehood, equally with me  
Light-leaders, shepherds. By my parable  
I nowise speaking utterly a truth;  
I an authority sans self-belief:  
Thus have I sinn'd against authority.  
And men miscomprehended but the more. —

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

So, I have 'mock'd the Sabbath-law', who heal'd  
Sick on that day and ate with unwash'd hands  
'Mid sinners! Not against authority  
These deeds but rather against forms approved  
Of present practice; items half belief  
If still half sanction? Yet were sin the same:  
A failure to confess responsible  
For law's shortcomings me the source of such  
Subverting practice; else a failure to  
Admit law-conscienced deeds of mine worth faith  
Only by virtue of denying law.  
As of the blind authority I taught  
For teaching's sake as though authority  
Beyond mere man's opinion crush'd theirs out —  
Meaning: my more wide-wrought opinion proved  
In virtue of my comprehension theirs  
Not self-sufficient, total; so of law  
I spake as though some source beyond all men's  
Deliberate practice posited my deeds  
For lawful — meaning, as I now aver  
(Yea, Caiaphas, push swift to judgment lest  
My soul forestall thee !): sense of law in me,  
Values of ordinance for purpose 'proved  
Of conscience, show'd their formal sanctionings

## CHRIST

Trivial, comprehensible of mine  
Intent ; by virtue of my will, annull'd ;  
None less a lawfulness save law-deposed.  
Such were my sin 'gainst sanction ; I a law  
Without self-proclamation utterly.  
And men miscomprehended but the more. —  
So, I have ' taken upon me to forgive  
Sins ' ? And in so forgiving fail'd to show  
'T were but my holier bearing in my faith  
For new law beyond sanction which show'd sin  
(Otherwise righteousness concluding all,  
Which theretofore were righteous, for some sin)  
For sinful ; as the sinfulness alone  
(Like previous sin proving their deeds some right)  
Proved righteousness in my deeds : righteousness,  
The wonder, beauty, meaning but of life  
Conclusive utterly, self-organized,  
So world-constructive inly. And I spake  
As though some mercy over beyond men's  
Sense of a mutual frailty each for each  
Forewent the punishment — meaning : mine own  
Insight and sympathy of soul's estate  
In me as them saw each unto himself  
A scourge sufficient ; hence, a mercy-seat.

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

So did I sin, forgiving ; I, a peace  
Without avow'd self-conquest. Can I now  
Assume by any grace beyond this sin's  
Self-torment to forgive my life at last ?

Nay, 't is my soul that fail'd in all these things :  
Myself that spake and sinn'd. I at the last  
But learn the nature of each son of man,  
Myself as any : so to speak and sin  
Failing of self-responsibility ;  
By reason of the need of minist'ring,  
Of compromise with souls not mine (nay, mine  
By individual insight !) thereby falsely  
Imputing to some God beyond this world,  
Some world beyond this soul's, the sinless lore  
Of full accomplishment : but such would be  
Nothing accomplish'd. Lo ! it is my truth  
This falling short of truth ; even my death  
Were half-accomplishment, some falling-short  
Of perfect self-possession save I be  
Inevitably born for compromise  
Rightly fulfill'd, ay, comprehended well  
By sheer misunderstanding. Now I see  
No failure. Let me but seal up the sum



## CHRIST

Of perfect operation by one last  
Word, one last teaching, compromise of truth  
Supreme of self-divinity with their  
Stale fiction of a God of Abraham !  
What were a God In whom no falling-short  
Betray'd truth's utmost self-sufficiency  
By error, self-proved, constantly annull'd ?  
Such self-annulment constituting sin  
Divine : for where were any act not God ?  
What were a world beyond soul's world which fills  
All birth and death with sacrifice, through strength  
Of service, mutual ministry, each least  
Person proved universal, absolute  
By world-inclusive insight, soul through soul :  
Absolving misinterpretation, yea,  
By rich love-needing : still gainsaying hate ?  
Let me annul this last uproar of hate  
To one death-sanction for the love I bear  
All men. Let me avow to this sin-world  
Its sin's finality by being as sin  
Still self-redeeming ; nay, no mercy-seat  
Beyond : hence sin's forgiveness each through each.  
Let me uphold the law's authority  
By reason of our self-accountable

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Ultimate judgment both of false and true.  
Let me declare God and my ministry  
One ; scarce by dissipation of this strength  
To 'heaven's right-hand and wonder-throne', though  
still

In those sole terms their ears can understand  
Of physical kingship and some power afar.  
Let me affirm (if not that men may now  
Have insight, that some hour they apprehend)  
My manhood, conscienced personality  
By virtue of this self-responsible  
Accountability through every act  
For failure as accomplishment ; my spirit  
Divine. And there is nought beside divine  
Save world-belief, conscience-totality !

Hark ! For they now accuse me : 'Didst thou say :  
'“I, God are one” ? And art thou then the great  
'Messiah ? ' — Shall I give them of the bread  
Of life, faith of my faith : still in their phrase  
Of false-proved figure ? Shall I stand at last  
For understanding's sake so utterly  
Miscomprehended ? Ay, for such the full  
Accomplishment ; that all shall comprehend

## CHRIST

The absoluteness, so divinity  
Of failure ; the all-comprehensive truth  
Of self-sufficiency even to death !  
Lo ! for the teaching's sake ! I, born to teach  
Death-mastery, the overcoming of  
The last infirmity : man's fear to fail !  
Here in this final failure to speak truth  
( 'T is inmost holiness ; 't is ultimate use )  
Is mine accomplishment. — The hush is vast.  
Man's whole life listens, waiting on the word  
Which saves the world :  
“ Caiaphas ; thou hast said.”

## PILATE

NOW are they hot for Herod : they, that pack  
Of priestly wolves, of scribes and sects and dogs  
Of jealous dogma ! Would but Cæsar send  
A rescript for their riddance ! Yea, some year  
Shall tens of thousands Jews hang crucified  
'Twixt heaven and earth, I warrant them. — Till then !

Now, what of Herod ? Will the flattery  
Befool him ? Will he exercise a right  
Of judgment o'er his subject in a seat  
Not his ; and give the Roman legions cause  
To rape Peræa ? Will he scent the trick,  
Send Jesus unjudged back to Pilate's door  
By Hebrew cunning ? Rather may he seek  
A mutual flattery in pronouncing this one  
Free Galilean ; in Jerusalem  
Not his to hold. For Herod is astute,  
Knows that I favor not their Sanhedrin  
Nor law-prerogative in priests and scribes ;  
But would for Cæsar Cæsar's. — How that phrase  
Of this philosopher fits well the tongue ! —

## PILATE

And what of him they carry with them there  
Cold, calm and stoic, him whose blood they seek  
For being perchance more Cæsar's friend than they ?  
Now while they swarm at Herod's gate I'll set  
(Should they by evil chance hurl howling back)  
My soul more steadfast to resist their lust  
Of blood by musing on his meanings here. . . .

When I did question he did plain reply. . . .  
Even as I told them I shall still maintain :  
'The man is just. I find no fault in him'. —

How can I then condemn him ? For the law  
Chastises not the proven innocent.  
Only — there are causes beyond the law  
Why Cæsar's service might enjoin for now  
An acquiescence ? For they well might raise  
Tumult like that at Cæsarea when  
I, being unprepared (as now !) to quell  
By force of arms, was forced to yield a point  
For Cæsar's sake. It will not come to that.  
Yet but I wish I had my garrison  
Of Cæsarea at Jerusalem ! —  
No more of this. 'T is Cæsar's, best, to sway

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

The mob by absolute justice ; not by fear  
Of legionaries ; nor by mine own fear  
Of being impeach'd at Rome for failing please  
The Jews — a fool's chimera ! I have friends  
High-placed for my defense. And yet —

I'll still

Deny priest-vengeance and protect the man.  
Ay, fain would I address me to his soul  
To learn of him. For is not wisdom wealth,  
Power and kingship to the citizen ?  
How much more thus shall I over this folk  
Be governor, be Cæsar's servant well  
By being disciple ; he my master. I  
Decree no punishment. I give to him  
His freedom so but he converse with me,  
Yield fair reply to questions fairly put  
In daily intercourse. I offer him  
No courtiership ; for he would spurn it of me.  
He is no parasite ; is too much man  
Of wealth, power, kingship even in himself  
To want a Roman's favor : he, the son,  
So credibly they tell me, of some god ?  
Haply. At all events a man who firmly  
And nobly said : ' A king am I ' — still meaning

## PILATE

A wise man. For he added: 'But my kingdom  
Is not of this world' — meaning, as I know,  
Not kingdom like to Cæsar's. 'Tis such wisdom  
I would attain; for I am weary of  
A Cæsar's favor and a people's wrath.  
'Tis some fresh Attic teaching that he speaks  
And I would fain acquire; fain to be king  
As he; and rid of this time-serving strife  
Which fawns and flatters, yelps and snarls; and seeks  
No well-made manhood, true self—

Hark! What sounds!

So soon swung back! And in what hot-flung haste!  
What fangs and wolf-yells! I've but twenty spears;  
The rest at Cæsarea. Will my friends  
Stand firm at Rome? Can any man be wise  
Needlessly to provoke a tumult, force  
Himself outdriven from Jerusalem  
To Cæsar's wrath and uttermost disgrace  
Just for some stickling at the law? I ne'er  
Let law prevent my vengeance; shall not now  
Be hinder'd of my glut of blood for this,  
When the time serves. But now, 'tis Cæsar's best  
Service to yield a point so seeming-small,  
Injustice to one man. Scourging, perchance,

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

May sate them? At the worst 't is forced upon me.  
I'll leave it to the popular voice to choose.  
Not mine the guilt. —

And see! What fool is this  
They mock at? Certainly, a man who makes  
So fine a fool-king can be no fit source  
For Pontius' instruction! I were fool  
To make weight of the matter. Let men bring  
A basin that, when things go ill with him,  
I'll show them how I wash before all men  
My soul from business with this King of Fools!



## JUDAS

JUDAS! — The name is hateful; yet it clings!  
Yon street-hag jeer'd at 'Judas'! — Such a priest  
Call'd 'Judas? Judas?' and I came and took  
The thirty pieces which he offer'd me;  
And kept them with me, with me till but now!  
The Master still said: 'Judas, thou art he'!  
Judas! It is the name of such as I!  
It hurries desperate now, grim through noon's glare.

Judas! I thought to have flung the name beside,  
There with the thirty pieces now I flung  
Full in his face, the priest who call'd me by it!  
Yon street-hag I pass'd headlong, cursed I her  
For any cause save 'Judas'? — If perchance  
She knew not I did give the money up?  
Call'd me the old name for the stale reproach?  
Would speak some other could I tell even her  
The torment and repentance? —

None would speak

A new name: not the bearer of no name!  
Nor should I hear it: I can hear but one,  
Judas! Nought else so hateful in the world

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

As cheek by jowl with me to cleave by me  
And be my leman-life to hound me on:  
Even as I kiss'd him with a leman's kiss.  
The hag shrank from me; but the name abides.  
The world would let me go. Not so this Judas;  
Which will with me and hang with me this  
hour!  
With me : a Namelessness just by this name !

Judas ! It was the Master called me by it.  
'T is so it sticks ! — Not that did such a hag  
Jeer 'Judas' ! She were such an one to deem  
All creatures Judas. I but yield a name  
To all men and all women ; not myself  
The Judas solely. Nor that such a priest  
Call'd 'Judas ? ' ! When I flung the pieces back  
Was Judas quite a nobler sort of man  
Who does God service nor demands fair pay ;  
The imputation cancel'd of reproach ;  
And 'Judas ? ' flattery : a name not quite  
For any creature ; even I myself  
Not Judas wholly ! Ah ! Were these things  
so !  
Then should I hang this day with half the hope

## JUDAS

Men might forget Judas had such a name. —  
Nay, but the Master : ' Judas, it is thou ' ! — .

Judas ! It is my name and mine alone.  
Judas ! I thank thee, Master ; who speak'st truth,  
The right name : Judas, wholly and alone.  
Judas ! I thank thee, Master ; that 't is I  
Who hang this hour for being but such a name.  
There is no other. I fulfill the name  
Utterly ; take away from all men else  
And women possibility to be  
As Judas ; none less evidence the world  
Judas for pitiless perdition ; not  
World's flattery nor menace any more.  
The street-hag knew she need not fear to be  
As Judas ; Judas were her saving strength  
Who knew none other. Such a priest did know  
Blood-guilt were no God-service. Both are saved  
By my perdition through the Master's word !  
Master, I thank thee. Judas ! 'T is my truth.  
Here is the bough where Judas for the world  
Hangs that he be true Judas : and none else !

## MARY

THOSE distant moving twain upon the hills,  
Those will be John and James returning to me  
Even from afar and after many days.  
They had not faith to 'wait His coming', here  
With Zebedee their father and with me ;  
Must needs go forth and among many men  
To preach His gospel. How could they expect  
Men to receive the truth they scarce have held :  
The faith of my Son's presence with all men ?  
'T was Peter's place ; 't was all of truth he had,  
To be evangel : theirs to love and 'wait' .  
'T is the first failure. For my Son fail'd not.  
Yet used He home to me in those great days  
And I used forth to meet Him. Let me now  
Anticipate these prodigals who come  
(These distant waxing twain upon the hills)  
Even as my Son was wont to come to me,  
In those first days of calling of the Twelve,  
Along this footway. I will fare me forth  
To meet them. Would there were my Son with them!—

So soon the world forgets. Forget not I !

## MARY

My soul is living with the light of words,  
Deeds, looks and breathings of the soul of Him  
My Son, and my Son only ! No pains else  
Did bear Him to the birth that shall not die.  
Yet, those Hosannahs. Yet, that feast of palms  
And people hailing Him, my Son, my Son !  
Where are those many faithful ? Are they then  
Crucified as my Son, as my soul too ;  
And may not rise again as He, my Son,  
Hath risen and my very soul with Him ?  
Were they so fond and are they now so faint ?  
How sad must be their weakening. 'T is for them  
The fond yet faithless that my whole heart grieves :  
Even for James and John amongst the rest ;  
Who needs must seek complete a work, so whole  
Already with His mission ; needs must forth  
To supplement His teaching : and have fail'd  
Convert a world which was already His  
In His good time ; yea, now and always now.  
See they not : it is still the selfsame earth  
Of Him, my Son, in which His words and deeds,  
His looks and breathings sanctified things all,  
Yea, resurrected God's sweet countryside  
To an undying wonder ? Nay, the world

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Of speechless things and folk without a soul  
Forgets not. Can men's souls alone forget ?  
Alone forget, alone who need to know ?  
These are the pastures and the little hills  
Of olive ; this, the way wherein I walk,  
Was trod by Him ; and yonder is the blue  
Whereon He stood appearing unto them.  
It is His earth and His unendingly ;  
Mine earth by faith in Him, by ' waiting for '  
Fulfillment presently, yea, present now  
Without completion more. Can aught forget ?  
Yet but have James and John forgot and fail'd ;  
Now home are coming, ay, to tell me of it  
For comfort's sake. And I will comfort them,  
Tell them anew the story for their faith. —

Yea, here are John and James, who from afar  
And after many days return to me  
Even by this footway, whom I wandering forth  
A little further than my daily wont  
Now greet in coming, as they crown this hill  
Sudden appearing. I have yearn'd for them  
In absence. And their nearness seems a new  
Rebuke and chastening. In their mien I see

## MARY

No sadness for the world of humankind  
Their brethren, brethren also of my Son.  
No sadness for themselves ; no failure, no :  
But a great light. The spirit of my Son  
Transfiguring their faces to mine eyes  
Is with them twain. And all their poise is high ;  
And as they come they talk on mighty things  
And bring a whole world with them. — Shame, that I  
Had deem'd myself worthy to hold alone  
(Deeming these John and James and all men faithless)  
The sacred intercession unto men ;  
Had deem'd the work complete, though I in mine  
Undue assumption dream'd that I alone  
Knew this His second coming evermore !  
I ? What have I, who weakly tread this way  
Within this circuit of these little hills,  
To know of God's good mercy, through my Son  
And these, unto all multitudes beside  
Who only need to hear, so to be saved ?  
Nay, but who needs must hear ; else are not saved !  
Yea, I have sinn'd, been faithless. Can I bear  
Their holy greeting ? Will mine ears receive :  
Mine ears that did so very near forget  
The meaning of His sacrifice for men ?

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Was I His mother, who forswore His world,  
Denied within my soul men's faith in Him? —  
Hark to their greeting; 't is as my Son's voice :

‘ We hail thee : Mother ! — For no man forgets !  
‘ The people all receive Him with the Word ! ’



## MOHAMMED

AND I arise and face the flowing east  
As in the days of youth, before the Creed. —  
Here have I sate amongst these tombs of stone  
Beside Medina in the desert stark  
This night-long. Till the dawn at last hath sprung ;  
And, with the dawn, God's speech vouchsafed anew  
Unto the worn and feeble ; as of yore  
In days of strength to me on Meccan hills : —  
Now in the name of God, compassionate  
And merciful, who speaketh by my mouth !  
For I have said : ' Cometh a day when no  
' Soul can avail aught for another soul ;  
' For the ordering on that day is with God.  
' Yea, and the soul shall know what it hath wrought '.  
Thus have I said : ' The soul shall surely know '.  
Thus have I said, knowing the soul shall know ;  
Knowing that God's the ordering on that day :  
And therefore certain of the ways of God ;  
I intimately cognizant of God  
As of my being and my very soul.  
Wherefore a new interpretation springs  
Of this my ministry : even as the sun

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Startles to flame yon angels of the gale,  
The storm-sands swirling just above his bed,  
As he, the lord of heaven, awakes, starts forth  
And burns the world to wisdom ; so my soul  
Sees but itself in all that it hath wrought  
And makes a day of judgment of its own !  
Lo ! if I intimately speak for God  
The truths that yet spring wholly in myself  
By my conviction and imagining ;  
Then are not God and I even in these truths  
One, as the truths are now intrinsic to me ;  
My judgment and my prophecy, the same ?

Is it a dream, this hour that I have taught  
Of future resurrection, even that day  
To-come of judgment ; is it then a dream ?  
Is this high-streaming sun, that bursts across  
These shimmering-silent death-stones, God's sole  
sun ;  
And all these hosts of waiting dead, asleep  
From now forever ; and no waking more ?  
For if my lord and judge be with me one  
And this my prophecy be judgment too —  
As now I feel it in the certainty

## MOHAMMED

That souls shall know ; I therefore knowing the  
soul ! —

What space be for the plain tautology  
Of God beyond man ; who am in myself  
God in so far as God hath power at all ;  
Who am mine estimator and my judge  
Now whilst the common dawn leaps forth to-day ?  
If I have fix'd a faith for every man  
Even unto all-time, am not I at fault  
To fix for future what were novel-sprung  
To each anew, and only thereby fix'd,  
Man's birthright : judgment, conscience of himself ?  
Shall not each man who leaps as I have leap'd  
With sunsurge to divine identity  
(Upright nor prostrate-cringing any more !)  
Condemn the pitiful hypocrisy,  
The hitherto shamefacèdness that led me,  
Feeling the fire within yet to deny  
And say : ' God shall be ' ; meaning ' God is now ' ?  
Yea, and if God be Now, how might I fix  
A faith to all men who must equally  
Each in his time be God's ripe judgment-day  
With estimate anew to suit each time  
As perfect as is now to-day my faith ?

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

All was illusion ; both that hour to-come,  
And power to fix faith to a future age !  
Lo ! in my newly-found divinity  
I judge ; and judging must condemn the creed  
That call'd me here, that laid these dead about me  
Waiting beyond Medina for the word  
Of God, in desertness enduringly !

The word of God ! 'T were then idolatrousness  
To wait the speech of the oracle, when now  
The living God is speaking as I speak.  
One God or many, if beyond the heart  
Of any man, were utmost blasphemy  
Alike, unworthy of mine absolute soul. —  
And yet, the comprehension of the crowd !  
Lo ! had I said : ' The very God behold ye ! '  
Then had they worship'd me : and been betray'd !  
Yea, had I cried : ' Earth's judgment is fulfill'd  
' Even in the judgment-reasoning of each ! '  
Then had they stolen and slaughter'd, ay, straight-  
way  
With obvious impunity ; and sinn'd !  
Yea, for the folk that feel not Godhood in them,  
No all-responsible insight of earth

## MOHAMMED

(And how there be such godless, yea, I know not ;  
Though till this instant was I one of them  
Wholly ; as now in ignorance confess'd !),  
Were judgment yet to-come and God afar ;  
His speech unheard save still reported to them  
Through all their days. And therefore must there be  
Slaughter and rapine in the name of God  
To fix faith, as I find it, unto all  
Who feel not God. And therefore were it meet  
That these within their graves should wait till God  
Alive in future peoples plough their bones  
Into some sudden garden where was waste :  
And end earth's desolation. Though myself  
Have had some resurrection : and am saved !

So I incline and pray toward Meccan fanes.

## DANTE

I, DANTE, have depicted all these things  
In imitation of mine heaven and hell  
Within ; I, Dante, drew them as I saw them  
To duplicate the passion of my soul :  
Like some basilica of Christ on earth.  
And like some lordly-hewn basilica  
Covering earth where only naked earth  
Alone before had been ; so have I given  
Spiritual power of philosophy  
Where had been brutish feud and vacant brawl.  
All things now known beneath the heavens, beneath  
Earth or beyond the empyrean, all  
Have furnish'd forth mine imagery, themselves  
Acquiring passion as I spake of it.  
And all have been a picture of my soul. —  
This Beàtricè, would her own soul know  
Herself so marvelous matured with truths  
Till now not said of woman ? Would the child,  
The little maid I knew, the bride-elect,  
And lastly the frail matron recognize  
The mouthpiece of Madonna and of Christ ?  
This Beàtricè, should I look to take

## DANTE

Her salutation passing in the street  
As formerly, or should I see some wench  
Unlike the lady of that crystalline?  
Shall not mankind to-come, seeing my soul  
So strong, so tragic-passionate through this  
The symbolism, come to ask at last :  
' Was Beàtricè woman of the flesh  
' At all ? Was Dante this world's citizen ? '  
How subtler than subtlest theology  
This doubt and question ! In my soul to-day  
An introversion of the accustom'd orb !  
My life hath been iron reality  
As spear, axe, hauberk and those towers of strength  
Men rear'd in their Firenze out of stone ;  
Stone, yea, and iron hath been my pilgrimage  
Through years of exile ; and my tragedy  
Hath only been so flame-hot passionate  
With bitterness and stern relentless wrath  
At evil Italy, that earth hath fused,  
Grown plastic to the furnace of my spirit  
And — blown all into smoke ! Where is seen smoke  
There towers are fallen ; where my soul hath breathed  
Lie ruin'd very real realities.  
Where Beàtricè beams beatified

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Was every hour a maiden passing by. —  
But, shall conviction of a literal sense  
Keep true the symbol; or shall men mistake  
Earth all and hours of iron virileness,  
Human heart's-love and worship, for the words  
Of otherworldliness and wanton dreams?  
Shall the basilica seem faith alone? —

Were not the world right yet in wrongly taking  
The symbolism of my work and song?  
Hath not my method served its own defeat  
By treachery within the very walls?  
Hath not my soul been exiled by my verse?  
For I 've but duplicated this my soul,  
Have built about my passion a tower on earth  
Not meant for earth to stand and fall on it,  
But for translation to the terms of God;  
Have pictured, ay, described though scarce express'd  
The power of him who dwelling upon earth  
Not imitates but vitalizes faith  
By acts accomplish'd. Hath not mine own creed  
Dissever'd church and state, awarding earth  
To emperor, soul to the man of Christ,  
But reconciling neither? And if I



## DANTE

Portray by paradox the power of Christ  
Through giving over His basilicas  
To anti-Christ, shall anti-Christ be saved  
By calling them still temples? An there be  
The mystic sense to all that I have sung,  
Yet are the words the words of sensuous things;  
And, on the assumption of unsensuous soul,  
Must merit men's discrediting as writ.  
The symbolism must defeat itself.  
The vivid emphasis on things of earth  
Not merely cited for theodicy  
Discredits soul itself; unless the terms  
Taken of earth shall stultify themselves.  
I, Dante, have denied my birthright, making  
Life but a replica of visioning:  
Heaven and hell erected, excavated  
Above, beneath no firmament of man;  
Nor purgatory recognized for earth.  
I, Dante, of a stone and iron age,  
Who knew but man and woman; hated, loved  
But man and woman and this marvelous earth;  
Have only dream'd and told men of my dream;  
I, Dante, have discredited my world,  
Have lived at soul mine exile in my verse

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

And left my life's reality a doubt. —  
I am the last of them that shall mistake  
A portrait of a dream for world's real truth.  
I am the last, who, missing upon earth  
The realm of Christ, yet strongly feeling earth  
Its powers and passions, hating, loving it  
And moved to mighty speech, must spoil that speech  
With architecture of a spire, a pit,  
(Beyond the all-purgation of this life)  
Exhausting all of knowledge, yet unknown.  
I am a limitation unto men;  
If in my strength of style impassable,  
Yet also in the weakness of my way  
Of giving earth expression. For no mode  
Were less convincing of reality,  
Were more the manner of a mind at dream  
(Dispatriated by mere shift of the scene  
From speech to verse though both are native tongue)  
Than this of emblem and this ordering  
Of each event unto its symbolism.  
No man shall make a poetry less real.  
So have I fail'd by sheer excess of strength,  
Pursuing to disruption world and soul;  
And am but creature of my passing age :

## DANTE

I, Dante, lost in thought's duality  
And rendering unto God no genuine things  
Of God : by thus discrediting things all. —

Yet am I greater than mine age in this :  
That I would at the worst establish earth  
Of power imperial (to Cæsar things  
Worthy at least of Cæsar) and lead the way  
By genuine emphasis of vital facts  
To disregard of otherworldly lore,  
Of symbolism and false-parallel,  
Speaking the plain expression as I see  
And feel and move about and am of earth :  
The true Italian tongue though Italy  
Be there Firenze, here another state ! —  
Exhaust the symbolism, disregard  
The shadowy-doubtful necromantic myth  
I wove of Faith and Reason ; and take of me  
Fair purport, as I wrote experienced truth.  
Thus were the tale no duplicate of soul,  
But soul in some degree thirst-satisfied  
By utterance of the matters of its wrath  
As these affect its fact and are its life.  
Firenze, ah ! Firenze ! how I love thee

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Who am an exile hated of thy race !  
Ravenna, how I hate thee though thou holdest  
Body of mine and, with that flesh, my soul !  
These are the tragedies whereof I walk'd  
Incarnate poetry, by some mistake  
Mask'd in an oracle and mystery :  
These were my soul-purgation without end !  
Ah, Beàtricè, thou I mostly loved  
While mated to another and thou dead !  
Thou woman : thou a dream, but that this soul  
And body saw thee still and yearn'd at thee  
Though knowing thou wast not ! These are the things  
I truly spake and felt and fully meant :  
Unwilling exile in that spirit-world  
Which I alone best knew for truth of earth.  
The first of some new race of men am I  
Who, Greek-like, Roman-wise, dwell all on earth  
And live with it and love it and beget  
By earth high poem-progeny — not like  
Barren scholastics cloister'd in their lore.  
The first of some new race who, Greek-like still,  
Yet burst beyond the Greek in that their soul  
Cleaves to no atom-struggling 'gainst the fates,  
No refuge in atom-indifference,

## DANTE

But continence with passion-power combined  
In this sublime sense of concluding earth  
(Of rendering unto God God's things call'd Cæsar's)  
Learn'd of the symbolism. Where heaven and hell  
Have been or seem'd to be can nevermore  
Be passive agony, but masterful  
Appropriation of all literal truths  
To re-create : for soul is master now.  
If little save the chronicle of crime  
Of Italy accursèd I have spoken ;  
Else the death-phantom of a finite love ;  
Yet is the chronicle a novel art  
Prophetic of a poetry wherein  
That high philosophy call'd Reasoning Faith  
Shall sing incorporate with facts of earth  
Not parallel'd, not paradoxical,  
But literally universalized  
Unto world-permeant intelligence  
By insight of soul's self-eternity  
'Twixt birth and death. I, Dante, born of earth  
Yet wandering in the fiended forest of things  
Call'd past ; else through some void futurity  
Of seraph-crystalline, stand born at last  
Anew. Hell sinks ; heaven lifts. (Italian tongue

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Preserveth me from exile in the verse  
Else native to no earth !) I humanly  
Wake in Ravenna unto world's worth now. —  
I, Dante, have discern'd a world's purgation.  
I, Dante, have made self-contain'd an earth.

## COLUMBUS

FROM the accomplish'd triumph here am I! —

I have no triumph to report, my queen;  
No mere achievement; yet a truth so strange  
That Indies sink to insignificance —  
Though the significance were Indies' still!  
I have come through some tempests of the soul  
More vast than ocean-thunders; and have seen  
In storm-burst vision of vitality  
New-born to earth but by the wreck of all  
Which hitherto hath held us: you, my queen,  
God and our Empire all within that wrack  
Concluded, victims of the visioning.  
Now have I come to register my truth.  
Hearken me, pr'ythee, for I stand here now  
With some authority for service done —  
Even though 't were service Spain may scarce survive!

You who are under God in special place  
Of privileged communion, need not know  
The fear of failure; for your thoughts are straight  
From God. I have no privilege; did need

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Success to live: and I have found success,  
Am proved before myself and you and God  
Sane and assured some insight into things.  
I am not close to God; but I can say  
With humblest dignity I may love close  
My sovereign as God: I of my part  
Sovereign, who lay new Indies at your feet.  
Though are there moods when I would still undo  
The great discovery, and be as one  
Not near his sovereign nor himself a king.  
Hark! for I fear a failure, as I fear'd  
No failure from the winds nor waves nor spheres  
Of meteor-influence. And 't is yours, my queen,  
This doom; not as you may be under God  
My sovereign; nor yet as I, being man  
Yet sovereign in myself, so make you God  
To this my being; but as in yourself  
You are as I no sovereign; under God  
A subject, so in fear of failure too,  
Needing success to live. — Nay, hearken me!  
The seas have heard me, and I speak their voice! —  
Here are these Indies newly at your feet  
Laid for the glory of your faith and mine.  
They shall be vast and great; and on their wealth



## COLUMBUS

Spain's resource be upbuilded many years.  
Yet have I breathed their breath; and feel their life  
A new thing and a menace to old faith.  
There, God is otherwise than is our God;  
There (by the new insight which I have gain'd  
Of world and system — though I want the speech  
Of some ensuing age to give these truths  
Words and right meaning, and must founder so  
By paradox!) there must a sovereign  
Be otherwise than is my sovereign;  
Myself be otherwise than here I stand:  
More worldship be to God where worlds are fresh  
And full of untold interests and faiths  
Which mean no mere unvital imagery  
Of truth, imply no otherworldliness,  
But are some Godship in their life's estate,  
More worldship; though less frail humanity!  
More humanhood be to the sovereign,  
More sovereignty to the meanest churl  
(And only so some Godhood to them both),  
Where opportunity to be one's law,  
One's church and state and justice all in one  
Springs of the forest and the novelty  
Which shakes establish'd custom, buffets forms

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Of prejudged failure else ordain'd success  
(Of old-world slavishness) with salt-sea foam.  
(Had I the speech of some ensuing age!) —

Nay, 't were no treason. Yet myself have been  
Convicted of a grievous blasphemy  
Who sought a new Spain under God who gives  
No new for old save with the death of old.  
Yea, it is new, but it shall not be Spain,  
Its sovereign no queen of old Castile  
More than its God is God Granada-wise !  
I am an old man, yea ; but I have seen,  
Am made anew ; and feel a sovereign-like  
God-comprehension in my veins that mocks  
(Save a new faith and hence a new respect  
Self-lawfully be overt to new speech)  
The old unreasoning obedience  
(As ocean-tempests mock obedience)  
To faith-prerogative. — You tremble, queen !  
Strike if you will ! Perchance I may return  
From yon west hemisphere one day in chains  
To expiate what I but now have said ? —  
Nay, but I fear not. For, as under God  
Are you my sovereign even in this place

## COLUMBUS

So Spain is under both ; but not New Spain :  
More than am I no sovereign of myself  
In those far Indies whither I once more  
Depart (by leave) to learn new God, new faith,  
And a new nation builded in the death  
Of this ; of you, my sovereign ; of your God !  
And with the old I fall and die away  
Doubtless ; but must project my soul upon  
All destinies as you shall never do.  
Here may the monks a thousand years to come  
Wail masses for your soul ; there shall a growth  
Of unborn peoples daily at their heart  
Learn me, my meaning in the speech my speech  
Would mean. — Our wealth shall flourish and be great  
By reason of these Indies for a space.  
But now the faith, the Empire, falls away  
Even into nothingness ; and we with it.  
Yet have I seen and sought to tell to you  
The insight you may ask in turn your God :  
Ask God Who told me but gave scarce the speech  
Of some ensuing age that you might share  
The vision : none less true, filling my soul  
With meaning. —

I of the doom'd ship have stood

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

All darkling : suddenly when the whole night  
Opens ; and there is cloud-wrack and the wrath  
Of myriad stricken waves ; and then the black  
Is verberant through all the blinded void !

## SAVONAROLA

FIRENZE I have served my seven years  
And now am come to suffer for her sake  
As men have died before me : martyrs, saints —  
And now myself, mere Prior among priests,  
Girolamo. Yea, 't is strange that I have come  
Unto such noble company. But God  
Was ever gracious, ever spake to me.

When was He otherwise to any man  
If men but would take heed ? My only claim  
To merit in the sight of God or man  
Were heeding then the message. Did I heed it ?  
The query were not of my meed as man  
Merely ; of that I were indifferent ;  
Could take no heed for saving my mere soul,  
Nor now, when face to face with death, accede  
To private casuistry, were my worth  
Alone involved in my life's estimate.  
But I have been that leader of the blind,  
God's humble vicar with the souls of men  
At stake on mine. For I have had my day  
Of power in plenitude in name of Christ,

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Of vicarage to wide effect on earth,  
Though fallen so low to-day in earth's own sight.  
God's wisdom be the fall ; let it not shame  
The power that hath been — but because the sign  
I hoped from heaven hath come not nor shall come !  
Let the apostleship stand firm and fall not  
With this mere faltering of the flesh of me  
Before the drawn cord and the searching flame.  
I will examine by full confessional  
Mine own career now closed ; and let it stand  
Fair yet or foul for men to know me by.  
There hath been other record, false I know,  
Inscribed and publish'd of the inquisitors.  
Let this my silent searching of myself  
By God's grace permeate the minds of men  
Mysteriously to let them learn the truth  
Of mine example set — as I shall learn it.

All sums itself in one : that I denied  
Power of any potency of earth  
(Putting my trust in God, not Frankish princes !)  
To gainsay God ; making my faith the test  
Of God or anti-God in earth's affairs.  
May be, 't were that I ought not even conceive

## SAVONAROLA

Of anti-God establish'd in the earth :  
So be it. But there be those who under God  
Assume the power of God to plunder men.  
And such should be resisted would we serve  
God wholly and directly as we may.  
Nor, for I now confess it, spake I well  
When claiming prophecy, the gift in me  
By vision of the things unseen of men  
To speak for God as other than mere man :  
Foretelling future things by oracle  
As pagans use. For such a prophesying,  
Such speaking for our Lord, were beyond speech  
Presumption on my part and on God's part  
A supererogation. Speaks He not  
Through every tongue of earth if men would heed ?  
So it is true that to this least extent  
I solemnly recant : I spake as one  
Men call inspired indeed, but not in kind  
A prophet different from other men  
In all of whom faith like to mine might fill  
The void with some afflatus. Reasoning fair  
With knowledge of the times, with faith in right  
Conclusive in me of the truth of things,  
I could forefeel and did foretell indeed

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Much chastisement and mine own doom at last  
As now is come upon me — *Gladius*  
*Domini super terram*. The worst wretch  
If suddenly possess'd by gift of God  
With faith in right might prophesy as well.  
That were the only gift, the faith in right.  
And only so have I been prophet here.  
So be it. I man to man resisted firm  
The oppression of the powers that claim'd from God  
Power superior to my people's power  
Whereof from God I was the guardian.  
The pettier tyranny, Lorenzo's rule,  
Foul Piero's pretense, I spurn'd to oppose  
Directly nor countervail by counterplot,  
Save as I served Firenze by my voice  
And persevered for peace if honorable ;  
But being irreconcilable to death  
I but did well : the Medici deserved not.  
But now hath been the Borgia, he who claims  
The Keys of Peter. Did I well with him ?  
He conquers this my flesh : by flesh I fight not —  
'T is spirit that is protagonist. Yea, shall  
He conquer then my soul who no soul hath ?  
I stake upon the proof of simony



## SAVONAROLA

Mine absolute refusal to allow  
Pope Alexander to be proven Pope.  
Say not the scholiasts all, that place obtain'd  
By fraud endoweth with no authority ?  
Between this Alexander and myself  
There is no worthy combat. He is nought.  
He burns my body ; but him my soul ignores.

What then the doubt, if there hath been no Pope  
With whom dispute might lie ? As man to man  
He was beneath contempt, should fill not now  
One moment of the life remaining to me  
Which should be wholly dedicate to God.  
But there is world without these prison-walls,  
Firenze still, though hostile, at my feet,  
Example set by me unto all people,  
And misconception of the speech of me  
And false report ! And 't is to serve God still  
If I bewray mine hours yet left of earth  
To silence question, free from my career  
If possible without recant from truth  
The imputation of revolt imbued  
Schismatic, scandalous within God's church.  
'T were shame of this that made me oft-time yield

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Where right was mine against authority  
(As world would misconceive !), where I by yielding  
Endanger'd self, weaken'd my flock's support.  
And it is now this rumor of schismatism  
Moving and waxing when I am no more —  
'T were this I truly fear, deeply regret  
In mine attempt now closed to purge God's church  
Of rottenness. The rottenness alone  
Might never cleave asunder what God meant  
For one Church universal. Had I lived  
Longer, to urge the Council and conduct  
Myself the Cause of Christ against those crimes  
Call'd Cardinals and Popes, then had there been  
No danger of a schism from that I wrought.  
Their creed is my creed, could they but repent. —  
But now 't is otherwise. The time was short ;  
And I have left the purging unperform'd  
And reconciliation unattain'd.  
It were to any outward view a war  
'Twixt me and Rome, this Prior and the church :  
A fatal heresy ! — I seem to see  
In some outlying land where Emperor  
Is ever jealous of the pride of Rome,  
Where fervor of the rich, symbolic creed

## SAVONAROLA

Is chill'd by frost of some hard northern clime,  
(Ages from now may be, yet child of this age !)  
A stout schismatic rise and cry : ' From him,  
' Girolamo of Ferrara, him who bade  
' The Pope go burn in hell his thousand years,  
' From him, this martyr'd Prior of San Marco,  
' Came the first blow of the mallet on the wedge  
' Which now I wield to thrust the structure down  
' Divided from itself. Savonarola  
' Who first put inward grace 'fore outward chrism,  
' The first schismatic, first protesting priest :  
' To him be honor and glory for his crime ! '  
So shouts the Teuton. And the accursèd crime,  
The desperate revolt from God's true church,  
Spreads frenzied down the ages ; and the world  
Is rift in twain ; and God is no more known  
In mystic union of His Church on earth  
The one and universal. There shall be  
Rivers of fire and burnings, yea, of blood ;  
Wars, devastations ; and my name be claim'd  
For anti-Christ's great patron by my fault  
Of struggling now against this Borgia ! —  
Lord, if this vision be vouchsafed by Thee,  
Forgive the error of my fight for Thee !

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Accept the penitence for crime unguess'd  
But in Thine own inscrutable wisdom proven  
Mine irremediable shame and sin ! —  
No vision need it be, then, Lord ! if Thou  
Still to the last vouchsafest me no sign ?  
Only mine insight into mine own deed  
Its necessary consequence of shame  
Despite my soul's intention — insight aided  
By rack'd nerve, twisted sinew : my sight at last  
As now longtime of many ! Here I kneel  
Foregone, bewray'd indeed : my contumacy  
Proven 'gainst the unity of men's belief  
In Thy Church universal ! To have set  
Mere private judgment, personal unity  
Of reasoning faith above Thy best bequest,  
Thine instituted Body ! Of Thy Spirit  
The mind knows nothing, save by outward works  
As Thou, Thy Church, ordainest ! 'T is thus we  
heed

By heeding them who hearken'd long ago  
When Thou wast upon earth — authority  
Closing the question of power ! — Whom men call  
Pope, against him can be no just recourse ?  
Lo ! I have hitherto aloud denied

## SAVONAROLA

The excommunication. Before men  
Have I been cogent in my reasoning  
Contra authority ; whilst nought obtains  
Of logic nor of reason to avail  
Against the scandal I have caused thereby.  
Even this self-searching, ay, were scandalous,  
Unwarranted and proving nought of truth,  
Knelt I not thus in Thy confessional !

Lo ! when the time for absolution comes  
In the last hour before the people there,  
That absolution I will meekly take  
Publicly to my spirit, that the church  
(Perhaps therethrough my teaching may be true?)  
Shall triumph through me though my teaching fail.  
I must not perish excommunicate !

## MICHELANGELO

THESE are my children: these, the Night and Day.  
For I have wrought them with my body's power —  
Persons more of my procreation than  
Stuff of an artistry of thought and soul. —  
'T were not that slowly and with patient pain  
Under mine hand I made them hour by hour,  
These creatures moulded of the graven rock.  
The slow gradation toward maturity  
Were in thus much no thwarting to mine art  
But rather proof of reason in the whole,  
Of sight before and after. But being made,  
Grown to the semblance of heroic truths  
And left (as I have left them these few years  
Unchanged) well-nigh eternal where they lie,  
They still are stone, an occupance of place  
In reproduction of my form humane  
As I am body moulded to my height  
And breadth within this frame of universe.  
And therefore are they creatures of my body,  
Children in likeness of my fatherhood,  
Unlike the sexless self-completed soul  
That, needing nothing to perpetuate

## MICHELANGELO

Its self-eternity, of largess makes  
World of itself, createth as a God.  
Somewhat there was within me as I wrought  
That seem'd not procreative, seem'd self-whole.  
Somewhat there bides as then abode in me  
Of self-intention in mine offspring here ;  
Not vulgar imitation of man's frame.  
Men will no doubt detect some spirit in them.  
Yet is that somewhat spoilt, as I conceive,  
By grossness of the literal contour still  
Suggesting need that for the artist-act  
Were prototype in earth of other-sex  
My mate ; perversion of perpetuance  
From proper flesh and blood to senseless stone,  
The still-born of an heart hermaphrodite  
Wedded to world and moulding of its marl.  
Here before all men lieth mine heart's disgrace,  
Who, yearning with divine creatorship  
Internal to mine absolute insight  
Of spiritual beauty (as God made me so  
Beautiful in His sight), have sullied self  
By part-performance false of natural law  
In imitation of the God Who made  
(Himself, above the law He made for man,

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Sexlessly procreative, self-supreme !),  
Above His law of nature mating two,  
Flesh out of fiat as I made but stone.  
Man cannot make a man of flesh and blood,  
The image of himself in stuff of earth,  
Save by the woman-mystery. My way  
Had better been to hew vacuity,  
Essay no semblance from the block incised  
Which still for all my labor showeth nought  
Of the true man that breathes and moves and knows.  
I had been better wedded to some wench ;  
Well-quit of carving whilst my children grew  
And flourish'd and were I, body and soul,  
By mystery perpetuate in the world.

Yet have I loved not, scarcely until now  
Felt want of woman for the weal of me.  
My works have issued from the unsex'd stone  
(Or man or woman) mere humanity,  
Not fatherhood nor mother, male nor wife ;  
If individual beyond old types  
In all else, Titans merely, sexless gods.  
Haply the procreation by these blocks  
Allay'd the natural longing of the male



## MICHELANGELO

For femininity and served the need  
Of offspring all the while I dream'd them art.  
Haply my grim mismarr'd envisagement  
Found favor of the marble I but woo'd  
As any lover with assured success —  
Though still I fancied soul, as man hath soul  
(The power that is beyond the body's power),  
Created in me out of day and night  
These and the sundry monst'rance of my craft.  
Me much mistaken ! For at last I love  
And find no satisfaction in these stones  
Which, being for flesh a senseless substitute  
Whilst still no means to mount beyond the flesh,  
Speak nothing of the passion proven in me  
As I am artist to create, beyond  
Material of the world I find me in,  
Expression of the wondrous mastery  
That fills me : to create as I am God  
For mine own truth and love's own truth alone  
Not imitation but perfection of  
The utterance that wells within me now.  
For thus should I be (as I now am man  
To woman, yearning — even whilst to woo  
Intend I never ! — to attain by her

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Body's perpetuation, yea, and soul's  
As bodily bequeathed), be also source  
Of self-divine formation ; yea, my thought  
And hers united to new heaven, new earth.

The silence that is deathly in these stones,  
Fatal and mocking to my fatherhood,  
Were solemn-splendid in the sweet-tongued song  
I send her, first of many that shall be :  
Best of the hundred hitherto to art  
And man inscribed, but not to any soul !  
Within the noble language as she reads  
Shall the new world arise that 's ours alone,  
All mine, all hers, to all eternity ;  
No self-defeat in that the voice breathes not,  
Moves not, lives not ; for breath nor motion, life  
Were wanted any in the brain that reads  
And reading re-creates. No body of me  
Is falsely fashion'd in the marks I make  
Of plume upon the parchment superscribed :  
Nought but some symbol of the thought of sound ;  
A thought itself an art beyond all sign.  
The world of flesh and blood, as other men  
May sense it, leaves me as the mists of Rome

## MICHELANGELO

Burn from the Tiber, or the hills above  
Firenze are released out of a cloud,  
And all in gleam of eye is marvel-clear,  
Impenetrative of the new-won sight  
This love hath lent me as the sun on high.  
Only, it is my soul that, learning hers,  
Is sun in heaven as yet the mists beneath ;  
Is song in silence, speech within my pen  
Unheard but soaring as the morning soars.  
For I have come to love ; and all my need  
Of procreation through this flesh of space —  
Focus'd, enshrined within her woman-heart  
Where it is holy as the snow is white  
That lieth beyond Milano (being of us both  
In consonance with law and hence alive,  
Breathing and moving and inform'd of soul) —  
Sheds from the soul that mounteth more than man  
And leaves a godhead in my song to her.  
It is the art that struggled to be stone  
And could not, but became monstrosity.  
It is the art that, as it always fail'd,  
Darken'd my brow, furrow'd my temples 'thwart  
With hard perplexity, perturbing all  
To vast unrest that I did labor on.

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

It is the art too late to find release  
Wholly, nor smooth the misery from my mask  
Wherewith I clothe my face before the eyes  
Of all men and all women else than her.  
Such as I am, I am, made of mine own  
Too long sojourning here about the world  
A laborer to fashion flesh and blood  
As none but God by His best mystery  
Of woman-love unto the love of man  
May fashion it in image of Himself.  
I unto her may be some poet yet  
Of terrible tenderness, of tragic peace  
By liberation in and through her heart  
From any need to prison under earth  
The meaning that is beauty as I speak it  
Well-order'd to the riming of my soul.  
But unto men must I still play my part  
So long ago assumed ; never to end  
Till lean senility absorb all strength ;  
And art with power to pound or patch a clay  
Die as I die, the struggler, sculptor still. —  
Their pigment, nay design, wherewith of late  
I sop the Cerberus (I 've call'd it base  
And purpose of all art !) — 't were slight to help

## MICHELANGELO

Where by device of trick illusively  
Is symbol'd sordid substance, substance always.  
The manual dexterity I use  
Were still the undertaking ; still the form  
Is space-felt, cynically aping earth  
Indeed (in so far as insulting stone  
With mockery of chiaroscuro and  
The subtile pèrspective, so far success !)  
Yet warrantable but by fact of stone  
Not imitative, even, of true soul  
Save through the obscuring body : and thus condemn'd,  
The limning with the carving. — I for her  
Am maker. For the rest I am but man.

These are my children ; still-born, struggling things  
Of every gaze that chance to glance them by :  
Insensates of the insensate ; Day or Night ;  
Dawn yet or David ; Twilight or the God  
Of Wine ; Madonna with the Child, the Dead ;  
Or Moses half-hewn still within my mind.  
These are my children. But mine art is song  
Sentient in love of her : for her, for me :  
But not for any other of them all.

## MILTON

NOW am I left in mine old age with God  
Alone. Blind, desolate, I still have God.  
Princes and potentates they are not God.

How have I seen the great days of the earth  
Like froth devour'd ; and all our hopes of strength  
Made to a mock and scorn ! But still is God.  
How are the evil raging ; and the wrong  
Wholly triumphant through the length and breadth  
Of this lost England ! Yea, but still is God.  
Yet, shall the commonweal that men have lost  
Be commonweal regain'd ? In God's good time  
Doubtless. But here I sit at Gizeh shorn  
And blind, a mockery. I sit ; and God.  
Even hath my sacrifice of sight brought nought  
Save bitterness : and commune close with God.  
Yea, in the loss of every outward thing  
Of sight and fortune, opportunity  
To stir foot in God's service ; still I owe  
Rich compensation, empyrean hope  
Of him who stands and waits : this life in God.  
Scarce might I mean with any honest heart

## MILTON

(Though grief would urge it) that in just such ruin  
Alone gain I the vision and the voice  
To sing of Satan, Eve's and Adam's fall  
Through Satan, and the splendor of God's hosts.  
These seem but figure of the truth I feel  
Celestial, overpowering, immense.  
Scarce might I mean (though here I shrink at least  
From sacrilege and stark unreverence)  
How Christ I sing and man's redemption through  
Him,

The second Adam — 't were but figure still  
Of this best grace, this unity with God.  
Nor might I mean that I in durance sitting  
Sing the blind Samson, earth's most tragic man  
Of men — save Samson were my very soul  
Named but anew ; and thus were God within him  
The true song's spirit. These I mean not ; yet  
Even as those orbèd constellations and  
Sun's fiery magnificence were fountain  
Of mine imaginings of Satan's wars  
When sight was to these eyes, so Satan's hosts  
And God triumphant (truths of inward eye)  
Seem but suggestion of some truth to-come  
Beyond immediate vision, yet the more

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

My faith and hope, my very love of God. —  
Let not the spirit flag because of age !

Somewhat it were, to search in my past faith  
For signs of this awakening ; and thus  
Foreshadow something of articulate truth  
Reserved for later ages and a man  
I know not : trace some growth, development  
Of here and there some partial prophecy,  
Some mutilated vision which in sum  
Shall mean as I by miracle would mean.  
Thus, to the task ! — I cannot well recall  
Even in mine adolescence such weak years  
As were not, half-unconsciously, inform'd  
Of independent judgment in affairs.  
And this I heed well, that, with riper days  
And conscientised full maturity, I took  
Firm attitude of non-conformity  
In spiritual professions. If I vow'd  
No vows (when learning and the studious garb  
Meant clergy ; and the laity, ignorance  
And wassail), 't was that something in me stirr'd  
Unto revolt ; at best, unto a power  
To deal direct with God and God with me,



## MILTON

Brooking no intercession from a church.  
Such then the key-note, non-conformity  
And right of private judgment with direct  
Appeal to God in Scripture and in faith.  
Confirm'd in such view, I at first withdrew  
For travel, study, teaching; when the times  
In public life of independent thought  
Demanded nought, afforded no foothold  
Unto the root-and-branch reformer. Then  
At the true call and in the desperate need  
I labor'd earnestly and honorably  
Preserving independence, unenslaved  
To any project or of friends or foes:  
That England might be England. When the times  
Fell; and I blind and desolate am left  
Alone with God; mine independence still  
Is mine, my private judgment unimpeach'd  
And unimpair'd. But markèdly the appeal  
To God in Scripture or to God in faith  
Is of a novel nature. Let me pause.

For everything that I have deem'd of God  
His handiwork hath fail'd me. Mine whole world  
Hath sunken and is wrack. — Did I mistake

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

God's will and purpose? Did I contradict  
The express command and set my strength against  
Omnipotence? Was God the God of kings  
And tyrants? Nay, for kings and tyrants deem  
Earth theirs, not God's; and therefore God's good care  
For their good solely, and themselves in the world  
God's vicars, hence in all equivalence  
God upon earth. God cannot work for these.  
Yet have I thus been guilty as I blame  
These tyrants; I have held God partisan  
For this or the other good within my soul  
Or in the world; though all things else of the world  
(And in my soul) no care of Providence.  
Thus have I made these few things of my world  
Tyrant of all else; and my soul-desires  
God upon earth. God cannot work for these.  
Yea, I, who brook no intercession, fain  
Had interceded even as Church and Pope.  
I, who have writ of Satan's tragedy  
And heroism, had deem'd God's adversary  
No care of God and so no truth of Him;  
Though God were God but in the conquering,  
And Satan very godly, who would brook  
No intercession, but demanded right

## MILTON

To deal direct with God and God with him.  
Ay, Christ were Christly not in interceding  
Where intercession were a blasphemy,  
But by subduing all things of His soul  
And world to godliness and Providence;  
And thereby making whole His universe.  
Samson were tragic, and God's spirit in him,  
Scarce by the warfare (less by carnal love!)  
But by the cataclysm, involving all  
Alike, of God's wrath on the just or unjust;  
Self, Israel's servant, even as Dagon's hosts!

Thus the new faith of mine unflagging spirit  
In age as in mine earliest youth is still  
A self-dependent and unswerving zeal  
To deal direct with God, brooking no cant  
Of customary creeds to intercede.  
Yet the new independence craves some fresh  
Fashion of God, Who, equally all things  
Of right and wrong as I must see them, yet  
Fosters the final truth in heaven's own fall.  
I cannot reach the reason why some things  
Of God are right and why some earth-things else  
Are wrong, yet equally of God the same.

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Old faith falls from me as my sight hath fallen,  
Leaving me outer darkness, the dismay  
Indeed of one who sits at Gizeh shorn  
And sightless ; but within, a truth of God  
New : how no evilest tyrant of them all  
But God is with them working still for truth ;  
And how I, wielding on the just and unjust  
Alike the scourge and the sustainment too  
Of man's great epic of the primal sin  
And final godliness, the hellish power  
Of Satan and the healing power of Christ,  
Am left in mine old age blind, desolate  
Indeed ; alone by knowing but all in God,  
God but in all ; my right, their wrong : but God !

And thus is God through me, as God through them  
Fill'd of an universal hold of earth,  
Though the wrong triumph. Thus my aged soul  
Hath faith and dealeth still direct with God.

## LEIBNIZ

WHAT uplift of the spirit in these stars !  
How, in the pale dawn waxing yonder wide  
And wider with each heart-beat of this breeze,  
Seems each to feed on holier flame, seems star  
Or fiery influence scarce to melt away  
As once men dream'd, but to wax each in place ;  
Remaining each a star yet each the more  
Achieving sunship by the sphere's increase  
Of light ! I lean from this stuff'd chamber forth ;  
Some span, may be, project my brow beyond  
This eastward casement ; and receive the dawn  
And all dawn's wonderful significance  
Into my breath and being (soul and all,  
Fatigued with toil of mathematic task  
The night-long ! ) ; soul and all receive of this  
Heart-beating, breathing movement of the wind ;  
And am resuscitate ; as one arisen  
Out of some sepulchre I sense the truth  
In new strength ; am of insight into God  
More vital than my calculus : am dawn  
And sunship of these stars ! Let there be light  
Even in my laboring brain to clear at last

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

The calculus, the monad-chaos from  
All need of preassumption, overlord  
Or arbitrary dawn of a sole sun !  
Let the new day be stars' : sun, but a star  
Self-like more largely luminous ; yet stars,  
Each still a sun. Let the new problem be  
Development inherent to each least  
Of minimalities. Let God be soul,  
Mine and each monad's equally ; no lord  
Unmonadlike ex machina, beyond  
The mutual scheme emptily superposed. —  
How strangely rational ! Behind me heap'd  
Lie year on year of labors, leading but  
To subterfuge : to some absorptive dawn  
Defiguring these stars, to some false-stars  
Figments of fire on sun's fix'd palimpsest ;  
Not sunlike systems each a dawn, not sun  
Some very star but by earth nearer view'd.  
Now these things melt away ; nay, wax and burst  
Transfigured each to splendor of this sense  
Of self-conclusiveness ! What uplift of  
The spirit in this waxing of the stars !

Might I devise this new-won spirit-truth

## LEIBNIZ

In terms at last of any calculus ?  
How, within bounds of mathematic need  
For static value, indicate for each  
Minutest element a value earn'd  
Of absolute position, each in self  
The very problem's full infinity ?  
The problem's statement were the problem  
solved !  
Yea, every part were function of all parts  
Itself whole, yet discernibly a part  
Whose definition must conclude all else.  
No possibility of calculus,  
Of simplification, interchange of place,  
Invariant symbolism of each sign,  
Convertibility in any guise  
Would anywise remain ! Language must stand  
Self-absolute, communicatively  
A mere approximation ; for no sign  
Can bear one meaning in unlike contexts,  
But each is all of speech ! The calculus  
Would prove pure fluxion, still determinate ;  
Ay, static not in any part at all  
Save as each part is utterly the whole  
And thus not iterable ; each, unique.

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Nor, to allege of every element  
Fluxional worth wherewith to calculate  
As static till, beyond the problem, by  
Some strange arbitrament were value chosen,  
Were to perform such operation through  
The fluxion. Nay, the fluxion may not stand  
For calculation-usage. Yet, save each  
Be also all and thereby of itself  
Intrinsically make for infinite  
The problem and itself such all's inverse  
Distinctively determining all quanta,  
By its own standard constituting allness,  
And hence incapable within the all  
Of any subdivision (which would add  
A multitude beyond all multitude),  
Remains each least minute — minute soe'er —  
Yet capable of diminution still  
(Because not by true definition as sheerly  
Distinctive implicating all there is)  
As merely static unit capable  
Of iteration, hence analysis,  
Interminably further ; ay, despite  
Interminable aggregation, still  
Quite inexhaustive, plural : yea, in no sort



## LEIBNIZ

Appropriate to last analysis  
Fluxionalwise of any curvature  
Save curves whose constancy functions as straight.—  
Even as, were God some over-monad, strange  
To monad-ideality (yea, such  
False God I dream'd but yesterday), remain'd  
Each individuality of men  
But yet an unit, single ; and nowise  
An individual, but each with each  
Still interchangeable, nowise unique ;  
Hence capable of subdivision still :  
Some part of me, myself ; nor any part  
Quite minimal enough to be myself  
Beyond dispute — not that pineal gland  
Of Gaul's geometrician small enough  
To be the soul ! And yet the soul is all ;  
Yet were each, individual ; each star  
The God, the dawning also ; if beyond  
All mathematic, then were calculus yet  
Scarce metaphysic, scarcely adequate  
To any wisdom : as scarce soul, the shape  
Atomic of extent ! But soul were lift  
And comprehension of yon atom-world  
To morning-song, to spiritual strength

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Now more than formerly, ay, than when all  
Stars sang together. Sing they now my soul !

Light breaks; each star in waxing grows a world,  
A sunship and a day-strength. And my cell  
Of litter'd scribblings where I turn my gaze  
Is loftily illumined by these floods  
Which fling from this near star, my person'd self,  
Over the universe. The perfect proof  
Is mine of metaphysic spirit-scheme  
Which needs no God for overlord, no day  
Destroying starship : as no calculus. —  
The proof perfect in faith, not flawless quite  
In demonstration. For this day remains  
All seeming-starless to the sight. No touch  
Finds godship in these limbs and aching brow ;  
Which yearn and seek beyond world's monad-  
scheme  
The absolver harmony I feel for false !  
Oh, for fresh logic, strict as all the schools'  
Yet fill'd with insight which might save my work  
From waste ; some firm, well-knit concordance of  
The godship with the individual  
(Which, if by mere discernibility,

## LEIBNIZ

Concludes distinctively all else ; is whole)  
Wherein each proves each ; wherein even this false  
Abstractive generality, these false  
Exclusive iterative monad-points,  
May stand for error, posited of truth,  
Yea, proving truth by being exhausted, false !  
Then might the calculus be wholly true  
Not by approximation but by full  
Rejection of the explicit elements  
Transform'd to absolute uniqueness each :  
Not now my method. Then might well my soul  
Be more than mere revolt 'gainst current false  
Apotheosis of that infinite  
Whose emptiness of all vitality  
Is held for Godhood ! Then might I be more  
Than Baruch's anti-Christ: who ne'ertheless  
Even in mine own despite must yet retain  
The Spinozistic God of worldlessness  
Beyond my monad-world. — Will such a man  
Be moulded of the times to come ? Will dawn-hour  
Some day be hail'd by one whose spirit faints not  
Back : as my spirit faints to poring-o'er  
These differentials ? One whose harmony  
If preëstablish'd yet is instant still ;

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Whose apperception, if reflectively,  
Yet absolutely shall conclude in each  
Beyond conceivability of mere  
Exclusive iteration all world else  
By metaphysic beyond calculus?  
Such will there be ! who shall speak loud and clear  
What now I dimly feel : what now I am  
Even in my perfect failure — I who now  
Fulfill world-being, yea, avow my truth  
Of sunship, starship by my standard set  
And self-criterion — truth I fatuous  
Resign for figment of the fever'd brain  
Worn-out with much night-watching. —

Hail, Lord Sun !

Quencher of stars ! — Be God beyond my soul,  
Leaving me space in little to reflect  
His universe ! The morning is awake  
Without my chamber; from within I close  
The casement, monadwise devise my world  
Of calculi, of symbols representing  
Type, order, law ; as God will have it: dream !

## KEATS

SUCH sound as ocean only, autumn ocean,  
Makes in the mellow silences my soul  
And fainting strength unto this autumn hour  
Respond : a murmurous, heart-upwelling lift  
That bursts almost, yet bursts not ; though at last  
Someway is gone, back-lost into the void ;  
Gone, with indrawing, gasp and sob. The drift  
And cast things scarce are troubled ; and the voice  
Nowhere is firm nor forceful ; yet the depth  
And length and breadth of all, that in this hour  
Seems vital, suffers, agonizes, yea,  
To make respond, make feel, this stubborn shore  
Sea's tragedy of mute omnipotence.

It is the tragedy of aging world  
And of my young indomitable soul  
That bursts almost in singing, sings not quite  
The strong song of the sea when strand and wave  
Are one white turmoil. For I fail from strength  
By uttermost inception ; as this sea,  
Too plastic to the impulse, yields along  
Its length and breadth and through the depths of it

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Unto its own compulsion ; and is lost. —  
Had I the power of rock, to sing yet feel not !  
Yea, when the wave beats on me, to be voice !

For now I meditate a song of songs :  
Of how the early gods in tragedy  
Of mute omnipotence were all unmade  
By too divine inception. And the song  
Fails from denoting earth and men and Zeus  
For new and nobler Saturn ; but betrays  
A sad indrawing, backward sob and loss  
With Saturn's downfall, leaves the old god there  
Undone : for too divine inception of  
His piteous destiny. — Would that my soul  
Might sing the song of Zeus, Saturn anew  
Made godlier by community with men !  
Would that my song might be Hyperion ! —  
Would that my soul might burst and find its voice !

Almost 't is so, 't is well-nigh vocal with  
The insight of this tragedy of mute  
Omnipotence. The year will soon be worn  
Out of this impotence, be autumn sprung  
Unto ripe power of winter. And this soul,

## KEATS

Released of too swift sensibility,  
Too much of apprehension, freed and fair  
From Rome be journeying with song at last  
Because of utterance through death. — But now  
I sit by this dead northern autumn shore :  
An autumn and an ocean I, a world  
Of mute omnipotence. And in myself  
I hear the lifting swell, the almost burst,  
The sob of all-indrawing ; yea, such sound  
As ocean, autumn ocean, makes among  
The drift things and the cast stones of the shore.

## SHELLEY

PEACE be to mine inquietude of spirit,  
Its fever and its fierce improvidence  
Of utterance, and petulance of heart.  
Peace now be unto me and let me be  
(Alastor-like and as Prometheus' end!)  
All-permeative of this peace-fill'd hour.  
Let Islam sleep now with the sleeping Keats.  
Let me be, with the saturating strength  
Of this firm wind, beyond dejection fill'd  
By noon-tide and the blue, by sea and sky :  
Stout with its streaming yet be tranquil too,  
As o'er these pine-tops, for incessant speed.  
Let the west wind blow power and not dismay.  
For I am as the mountains and the sea  
A solemn purport ; if a cloud, no more  
Of lightning nor of deluge. But I stand  
Steep'd in the breathing of this atmosphere  
That moves and yet is mighty but by peace. —  
Yon lies the bark well-nigh prepared to cruise  
By this sweet coast ; and warm trans-Spezian breezes  
To bless us and refresh with blue and breath  
Of the pristine hyaline. I'll sit me here



## SHELLEY

Awhile till all is trim-set ; and renew  
Conscience of this that I have lived and been.  
For presage is (as yon high-toppling cloud  
At sail that swells aloft in the noon light  
So white and whelming, angel of this gulf's  
Eternal involution sea with sky !) —  
For presage is of some high change in me  
Which swells and waxes overweening with  
My yearning to embark and be, one season,  
Some firmer, wiser, holier than myself  
In unimpeded and direct commune  
With passion which is not rash inequity,  
With irresistible force which yet is full  
Of calmest beauty, sane and utterly  
True to a self-containment and a quiet  
Which ne'er was mine. Can beauty be aught else  
Than peace, whate'er of outward stress enshrine  
Its poise, its logic and its dignity ?

For flame-like I have tower'd above the ground  
On wing and wild song as the lark ascending  
And seen in vision what these eyes of earth  
Had never seen ; but to the face of earth,  
Its comfort and its vast inspiring, been

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

As blind. Shadow and shine have swept through earth  
And I known nought for towering sunward still.  
(And yet, to tower and be but earth-born more  
By every sun-pulse ! To be cloud in truth :  
Or pine-tree yonder, rooted even as branch'd !)  
Thus, have I not transcended every hue  
Of nature or of humankind to give  
To each thing somewhat of a mystery,  
Phantasm and image of its proper shape  
Projected rainbow-wise, but no true gleam  
Of the earth-paradise I named yet knew not ?  
Have not I made sweet mouthings of the scents  
And sounds beneath, above, beyond me here —  
Only to question still, and speak nowise  
Inherent beauties, the conclusive self  
Of each that is a conscience even in mine ?  
I, of all earth enamor'd, yet have said :  
'There is no God ' ; and have my god of love  
In cloud-shadow and sunshine nowhere found,  
For ignorance that his right form and face  
Are in me, therefore in the least of these.  
Him I have call'd no personal deity  
But some all-power ; and yet have furbish'd forth  
Him in the fancied Eros of an age

## SHELLEY

When all-power spake not nor was known of men,  
Thus yielding some false-person and no god.  
Yet, if an all-power of this human soul  
Be known and be my substance (as being known  
Implies such self-conclusion), shall I seek  
Beyond the form and function of this scene  
In mine imagining of its wild peace  
To prove the person of its deity  
In this my person and in each of these  
Who individually each may know  
(By sentience and by insight occupying  
Function and form of any other here)  
A meaning to the name and deed of love ?  
How have I lived in love and never known it ;  
But sought beyond, above ; bewailing all  
Which actuality might offer ; even  
When most adorning these, then most denying  
The personal godhead of their naked fact !

Yet see, I stretch my touch forth but to feel  
This staggering pine that, stalwart to the breeze,  
Stands world-aware ; and am, by his ripe pulse,  
Person of pine-stuff ; I am he — nowise  
By metaphor, by no sham allegory

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

But by my conscious occupation of  
His form and function as he holdeth mine —  
Each in his self-respective poise, one passion  
Of cosmic intermingling. Yea, how else  
Aver that I be poet and he pine  
Save that I am, in true imagining  
Of insight, pine-sap and pine-pristine strength ;  
As he in pine-sort and in pine-degree  
(Defined as my best science may define it)  
In vegetative majesty likewise  
Poet-partaker in my humanhood ?  
That I have written in early years how all  
Of earth's subhuman yet were human-like  
Aware and loving, man in less degree  
And soul-fill'd somewise : such a simpler creed  
Missing the true soul-intropermeance  
(Which guarantees distinctive quality  
To each partaker in the polar pact)  
Might scarce protect from feverish petulance  
Even one like me untamed to downright thought  
Nor stern consistence and articulation  
Of intellectual process. For I felt  
The meaning ; yet was tortured, driven to mad  
Evasion of this cosmic universe

## SHELLEY

Of sane interdependence fact with fact :  
Felt merely ; fretted, utterly debarr'd  
From logic's satisfaction : found not peace  
In picturing mystery beneath (an earth  
Sentient anthropomorphically) and  
A phantasm, overhuman though none less  
Anthropomorphic, unreal, inane ! —  
Such still the conceit of this unquiet screed  
Which, 'spite these firm winds and insistent  
                  stems,

These toppling clouds of earth-inwoven weight,  
I 'mid the bosom of yon Apennines  
Scrawl'd late, of figures dark for flood of light,  
Wan shapes in chariots hurtling through those  
                  throngs

Of earth's unburied and unburiabie  
Ghost-things of Sheol ; and their rout was all  
A pageantry, a symbol — and I ceased  
Still with no substance — ay : 'What, then, is  
                  Life ? ' —

Such question can be answer'd by no creed  
Of fantasy and ghouls of humankind  
Peopling no space, else peopling spaces where  
Are other lives and nurtures still ignored.

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Such creed pursues peace of a breathless chase  
Hot-hearted, nor knoweth how insistency  
Of unfantastic insight, the pure touch  
Of pine or strong wind as the pine or wind  
Is most itself, such touch on palm or brow  
Solves the enigma, yields a perfect peace  
Of intropermeation still more sure  
With every pulse of passion! — Such is Life. —

Alastor lives not nor Prometheus ;  
Keats is eternal memory, nought else.  
Yet am I here of this eternity  
Call'd cognizance, my conscience, ay, of each  
As each is ; cognizance in every touch  
Strengthen'd by passing ever on, and aye  
Evolving ; which, involving all of earth  
And ocean, sky and shadow, sun or soul,  
Is spirit : and needs not work by witchery.  
Such strength, being self-contain'd, stays temper-  
ate too  
And provident in every utterance. —  
Let this communing be my first of hymns  
To Beauty intellectually sane  
And worth the dedication of a life

## SHELLEY

In peace as was not hitherto vouchsafed :  
A Beauty which is common deity.

They call. The bark invites me to new life.  
Though yon cloud burst, what boots it ? It hath  
been.

## HEGEL

IN reference to Christ, the ' Christian claim  
' To Godhood of a single man ' ? Would I  
' Who speak of God as of an Absolute  
' Be acquiescent to enroll myself  
' Christ-follower or no ? ' — A subtlety  
I fain would answer by a subtler still !  
The correspondence, friend, between us two  
Stands dignified, ennobled by the zeal  
With which thou seekest truth. To thee alone  
(And this shall clarify, yea, new-define  
What save for thee remain'd in me obscure  
And stale) I may discriminate the true  
From false with literal judgment, feeling firm  
Reliance in thine own discriminative  
Interpretation. And I hold the point  
Of best, most fruitful attitude toward Christ  
Perchance a moot one ; still not wisely solved  
Unless with due regard for audience,  
For chance to be interpreted aright.  
Thus, for the mass of those my discipline  
Holds sway with, might there be a dangerous drift  
Of radical, even atheistic, rant



## HEGEL

In misinterpretation of my terms ;  
Else, haply, an unspiritual ipsism ;  
Spake I with uttermost unbosoming.  
In manuscript or volume thou wilt find,  
Save this, no rigid-wrought examining  
Of Christ and Christian in their present worth  
As creeds for ripe truth-seeking : save in this  
The which when well-digested (and, if need,  
Refuted, friend) I charge thee straight destroy  
Out of men's sight. The times are not yet ripe  
Save only mine and thine. — For, know, the scheme  
Of truth develops in men's absolute mind  
With grade from false toward true ; the foregone truth  
Turn'd false, the truth to-come not yet ripe truth  
Save for those souls elaborate beyond  
The mean elaboration of men's souls.  
Christ's truth for Christ might well be true, if still  
By logic in the sequel shown now false.

(And first, the figment of presumptuousness  
In thee or me or Christ or any spirit  
Needs no consideration. Where the truth  
Is spoken, acted, lived, attains itself  
Expression, no presumptuousness hath place —

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

God or no God ; Christ, I or thou proved God ;  
Were utmost reverence — a becoming self-  
Scrutinization of one's absolute mind :  
If only proof be diligently firm  
Nor words be wasted in avoiding proof.)

In brief, then, friend, thy question might be put :  
What bearing were of Christ and Christ's God-claim  
In Christian creed, to my well-reason'd system  
Of absolute spirit in its self-defined  
Intrinsic involution of itself ?  
The claim of Christ well known and well avouch'd  
Were personal divinity — if not  
Divinity of self as merely man,  
Yet in some sort divineness of the man —  
Not obviously made for nor applied  
To any man save Christ of all mankind.  
Thus in a general acceptance Christ  
Means claim to Godship of some single man  
As man, though not of other single men.  
Remains the choice (admitting absoluteness  
For philosophic postulate approved)  
'Twixt this and others of that triune scheme  
Which dominates all thought — this realism

## HEGEL

And those the mystic and the spiritual  
In dialectic — these : divinity  
Of general mankind and only so  
Of any as each might be held alone  
An instance of the Platonistic type ;  
Or, otherwise, of every man as self  
In absolute sense ; and therefore all mankind  
Divine, alone by virtue of each Godhood  
(Though these as God are utterly at one)  
Collectively arraign'd. And of this last  
Might Christ without distortion seem to speak  
When purged of metaphor in passages  
Which place believers as his brethren in  
The Father's household whereof he is chief.  
(But more of this anon.) For mine own part  
My teaching at first sight might seem to urge  
Divinity of general mankind  
(The mystic among these hypotheses)  
Not of a special person, whether Christ  
Or thee or me or any of them all.  
And I have seem'd, for mere conformity  
To general prepossession, to except  
Christ from the rule and still acknowledge him.  
Are these two views compatible ? — I scarce

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

(For teaching's sake in my timidity  
Of misinterpretation — nay, how strange  
In most men's eyes, from the truth-champion  
Such compromise-confession !) thus have sought  
Exact discrimination hitherto  
Between these views. Posterity will find  
Choice of interpretations ; nothing shown  
In any work of mine to guide the choice  
'Twixt general humanity, else Christ.  
Now for the subtlety, the fresh-defined  
Elaboration of this absolute soul  
To new discrimination. Times shall be  
When this must be attempted 'fore all men  
For teaching's sake ; but times are not yet ripe  
Save mine and thine. Destroy this screed ; I fear  
False-witness by the general mistaking<sup>a</sup>  
Of that I have to offer thee alone.  
For Christ the self-assertion would suffice  
(If Christ be God ; and God, no person else)  
Without communication to men else ;  
For general assertion of mankind's  
Genus and thus divinity, must one  
Proclaim upon the house-tops truths no ear  
(If absolute truth be not of any person)

## HEGEL

Could comprehend nor any tongue proclaim ;  
For the new subtlety shall I and thou  
Suffice for self, for Christ, for all mankind !  
'T will out, in its ripe time of absolute truth ;  
If not (as in the sequel shown) by force  
Of general system, yet by interplay  
Of men's mind-absolute : as mine and thine.

To criticise the current Christ-idea : —  
'T is well compatible with absolutism  
That one might claim rights of an absolute,  
Identity with fatherhood, a sonship  
Yet uncreate. In so far as did Christ  
Mean Christ's own personal divinity  
Stands the conception philosophic, proven  
By merest spiritual rights of self.  
And such claim were consistent equally  
As fundamental postulate within  
Each of these three schemes of alternative  
'Godship'. Were Christ the sole God, were mankind  
God and we functions, were each man as self  
A Godship and conclusive each of all,  
On either of these three hypotheses  
Might Christ proclaim: 'I and the Fatherhood

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

'Are one'. I thus accept fully in form  
Christ's claim to be divine. The problem lies  
In practical interpretation: whether  
Christ's Godship can exclude men else from God;  
Or if Christ's Godship merely means a right  
As instance of a godly type which, though  
Alleged for self-defining, scarce allows  
Unless by metaphor that any man  
Is wholly godly; or if Christ concludes  
A system of divine Christ-absolutes,  
Call'd men, conclusive each of all. And so  
Grant we the Christ-claim. Can it, then, preclude,  
As in the popular acceptance, rights  
Of Godship in disciples, scribes, ourselves?  
At first thought one would yield: In this duplex  
Coincidence of Godship, the All-One,  
With man, the One-of-All, must such a truth  
Be single in each aspect; God being one,  
Must God's coincident and antipode  
Be likewise one. (Though opposite of one  
Were multitude?) Such is the Christian creed,  
Which shunning ipsism must assign to Christ  
The single God-antipodean share  
In universal Godship. But at once

## HEGEL

Asserts the paradox: If God be whole  
And yet coincident with finitude,  
Then finitude unto the all-divine  
Is somewhat, is of rights; and, being not-God,  
Must either oppositely-coincide  
Else limit very Godship. And this last  
Conceit of limitation stands debarr'd  
By very concept of an absolute.  
Hence, if the Christ be God (and God someway  
Must man-define Himself, else scarce were God  
As man's world is concern'd), can no man be  
Excluded from such Godship as is Christ's.  
The realism of the 'thou not I'  
(Of Christ, though not ourselves, for very God)  
Stands utterly refuted by the truth  
That God and Christ, who ne'ertheless were man,  
Are one. And hence suggests the mysticism,  
The doctrine of a God-in-general  
Wherein we share, whereof are instances  
Thou, I, or Christ alike; but neither one  
Divine as person still. Will this prove truth?

And here my teaching plausibly might be  
Supposed to halt: Granting the Christ-divine,

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Then general humanity were God ;  
And each were instance, none yet utterly  
A Godhood. Yet I hold and now propound  
A system more consistent with the truth  
That opposite-coincidence inheres  
'Twixt God and finitude as shown (indeed  
By utmost logic ; and for faith) by Christ.  
For, lo ! the God, even though generalized  
Must (else the self-defining Absolute  
Were nought ; else Plato, ay, and Aristotle  
Abundantly arrived at truth in holding  
The species, the particular, related  
To its own type and thus, though ' mystically '  
Identical, realistically still  
Delimiting the universal !) must  
The opposite-coincidence inhere  
Of type with instances : no type conceived  
Except of instances. Wherefore to cite  
A general humanity must mean  
Not a conceptually severable  
Entity which may or may not have such  
And such a realization, and remains  
Itself regardless of each special case ;  
Yet somewhat which hath definition but



## HEGEL

In so far as defined in cases, each  
Contributing a definition, yea,  
Uniquely other than such type-defined  
Of any group or instances beside.  
Thus a determinate 'in-general'  
Inheres but to each instance and were else  
Nothing in general because defined  
By no self-instances but limited  
By facts : and universalness debarr'd.  
Wherefore, when Christ's claim reads: Each man  
    of all  
Is Godhood by the general intent  
Of each to oppositely-coincide  
With infiniteness ; shows that finitude  
(Which, by its single self-defining, posits  
All men as system-members each in place  
Distinct, unique, non-interchangeable)  
Determinate when conceived as from the stand  
Of each determinant ; each man of all :  
Self-totalizing, universal, God  
Even by finally contributing  
Of God-the-One an unique worldlihood  
Which were not otherwise coincident  
With God, nor God's in any sort as world.

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Wherefore the general humanity  
Is genuine, actual, definable  
Only if I, thou, Christ or each alike  
Is absolute Godhood : none excluding aught  
From ultimate divinity ; and yet  
No Godhood independently conceived  
Regardless of the character and truth  
Of each-and-each man as each lives and breathes ;  
And God, God, but by God-proved-very-man.

Friend, is the subtlety appreciable ?  
Note the nice demarkation. This were no  
Plurality anthropologic of  
Greek superhumans who are merely men  
Made men immoderate and impossible.  
No multiplicity of God as God  
Inheres to true finite-coincidence.  
For, even as the God is infinite  
In each, and only infinite at all  
By utterly unique discrimination  
Of man from man, yet even this infinite  
Of each, being total, is the same in each,  
And, being the same, is just the unique God  
The more discriminately by each new

## HEGEL

Recomplication through this universe.  
Christ is the God, I am the God, and thou  
And each of any, not by being alone  
Singly some God ; nor yet by instancing  
A general identity defined  
In some mere mysticism quite apart  
From actual definition in its facts ;  
But each by being discriminately one  
Of many unique others ( ' house ' among  
The ' Father's many mansions ' ) only so  
Insistently by very virtue of  
An irreducible distinctiveness  
Defining all else each as each and so  
A total, universe, each in its best  
Discrimination ; each as self thus God :  
The God ; and there is never God beside.

Thus is the scheme of absoluteness shown  
An actual affair of thee and me  
Even as of Christ in Christ's good hour of life ;  
Of each man in his hour of noblest strength.  
Whence follow many doctrines strange to thought  
In present days : how ' freedom ' were this sense  
Of utter world-conclusion through each act

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

(Howe'er in other view necessitated)  
Firmly discriminative judgmentwise ;  
Not by mere choice (delimiting the soul  
Even by the rejected act-alternative)  
But by will-insight thus coincident  
With the compulsion : how mortality  
Were by the absolute coincidence  
Not stale-perpetuated day by day  
Through soul-migration nor through influences  
Of works and wisdom on succeeding men,  
But, through the eternity of each least act  
As new-defining every act of all,  
Immortal to itself, beyond all death ;  
Though none the less this flesh-mortality. —  
Thus in this brief, my supreme act of judgment  
Uncompromisingly discriminant  
Of multiple meanings, postulates my spirit  
Unto itself an immortality,  
A freedom and a Godhood. Friend, I thank thee. —  
Judge if I be Christ-follower or no !

## EMERSON

THIS quiet Concord to mine indolent thought  
Hath long been inspiration, but to-day  
Shows limitation, faileth to attain  
Sufficient dignity to ape man's soul.  
Nature hath been my spirit's resting-place  
To pass in pleasance 'twixt the banks of God  
The safeguard, the immutable firm truth.  
I have been as this river slothfulwise  
Allowing alteration toward the sea  
Yet scarce conceiving doubt of the green land.  
To-day 't is different. I return to-day  
(Here in my hand a book disquieting  
Writ of one lately dead whom 'live I knew not)  
To this my shady station o'er the stream  
Not still as homeward to the heart of things  
But strangely, skeptic of the sweet wide scene  
Its amplitude to satisfy the soul  
Fit for horizons that enshrine no truth  
Taboo'd beyond an inmost scrutiny.  
Mine is emancipation from all creed  
To-day : no citizen I of earth, no scion  
Of fiat, no member of multocracy ;

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Just by mine effort to establish truth,  
Create world-system and autocracy —  
Yea, no disciple even of this one dead  
Whose work I find so faith-disquieting !  
Whatever be there of an Over-Soul  
Without my soul must prove its right to-day  
To credence, must establish as my banks  
The bounds and conduits of a private power  
Else universal in and of myself.  
To-day primarily I am myself :  
If also soul, how then were soul aught else ?

The doubt were doubtless unintelligible  
To any save myself, yea, unto me  
In any mood save mine upon this morn :  
Disturb'd if not enlighten'd, deeply stirr'd  
And troubled by the witness of this man.  
He speaks not plainly, seems almost with me  
To need some over-lord, yet ne'ertheless  
Attempts a system of distinctive things  
Self-unified without amalgamance —  
Unlike the mergence in mine over-soul.  
I have announced divinity that seem'd  
While overarching and enshrining soul

## EMERSON

To liberate, infinitize the man.  
And so have friends interpreted the faith  
With satisfaction. I alone demur.  
For, lo, the liberation seems to prove  
But novel Platonism, like the Greek's  
A leveling to Rome's democracy :  
A substitution of the legal right,  
As each is man, for world-self moralism ;  
As one is all, for all-conclusiveness  
Of universe unto each self unique.  
For, if an Over-Soul (which may not owe  
Relations various, but were thus finite  
Being incomplete in each) communeth with  
All men alike, were every man alike  
Equal in insight of the absolute truth ;  
Each person (if no longer atomized  
As in the Stoic schema ; yea, though lifted  
To bland fatuity of the perfect State)  
Unit equivalent, indifferent  
(Brahmanic, if not quite Christ-like, mysticism)  
I or the thief, yea, man even or the beast —  
Incapable all of value ; scions all  
Of blank arbitrament, authority  
And fiat beyond reason : worth ruled out

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

With any judgment of morality,  
With any quality of each-not-each.  
That yonder bird sings with a meaning made  
Birdwise, unlike the meaning of my songs,  
Is ultimate distinction. I may sing  
Wood-notes, may wonderfully feel in me  
Response unto yon woodland rhapsodizing ;  
The ultimate discrimination may  
Be overlaid with what one will of rich  
Mysterious insight of the neighbor-need.  
Yet am I still not nature ; no divine  
Absorbent mingleth mine with other persons  
As I here stand and saturate a world  
(Even as this Hegel hath his hold on me)  
With thought unthought of any other man :  
Suggested yet nowise put forth of him.  
The Indic myth and Maia were scarce mine own —  
More than did Plato so intend his truth.  
Yet Plato fail'd with his high poetizing  
To speak an unambiguous truth to mine.  
In him lay seeds of blank indifferences  
Which cropp'd with ripening of Lucretian moods  
To self-despair. I must assure mine own  
Ecstatic insight of the whole divine



## EMERSON

Against deintegration. For the truth  
Must hold some system of this earth to-day,  
Of me and men and yonder murmuring stream  
Unsame in attribute as if no God  
Were immanent nor any whole inhered.  
Nor will identity of generic terms  
In attribution vouchsafe sameness to them  
Save genus-substance be some Over-Soul! —  
Relinquishing no truth which I have grasp'd  
Of immanence, how save the hierarchy  
Of them and me from mergence in the mob  
Of monad-puppets, equally of God  
Indeed ; but, being indifferent, hence inane ?  
The green land flows within itself ; the sea  
Is image of the unresting alterance  
Of all things ; even this quiet Concord shows  
Passage but by appreciation (ay,  
Contrast in speed or kind of passage) scarce  
By any standard of unchanging earth.  
How save the soul from Heraclitus' flux,  
Pure finitude plausible to no sense  
Of some morality : relationship  
Responsible beyond the moment-man,  
Inherent yet to him ? How save this shore

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Whereon I stand ; how prove within myself  
Judgment of speed nor kind of passage, ay,  
Assurance even of this quiet stream,  
This indolent land, this sea toward which all tend  
As type and image ? Were we sheer distinct,  
Pure flux and passing, then were we but the more  
Self-imperceptible, alike inane.  
And thus would this voice in these pages prove it,  
Essaying if scarce comprehensibly  
A static continuity through all-time,  
An immanent eternity in change. —  
There shall be soul though Soul may be no more  
An over-world nor mere infinity.  
Someway shall I perceive the stream doth move  
Though Zeno, though Spinoza, though myself  
Have proven a motion all impossible.

Someway the stream doth move and is by motion  
An inspiration, still a type to-day  
Of mine own nature-born morality.  
The hour of this Hegel in my heart hath come  
To beat beyond the master by some hint  
In him contain'd : no over-immanence  
In anywayse infinitizing, save

## EMERSON

The soul reside in, be, the moving man's  
Irreconcilable discrimination  
From each and all things else that make his world!  
Such were a system of this earth to-day ;  
The intimate necessity of each  
For definition, self-determinance,  
Requiring every other each in place  
And character determinate thereby.  
For thus might I establish of myself  
An universe, be as I boast divine.  
Thus might I, as best insight of mine earth,  
Admit each unto his divinity  
Of world-establishment ; each person thus  
Concluded of my system : thus alone  
Conclusive each and equally divine.  
Nor might another schema so provide  
System sans all hiatus ; this of all,  
Appropriately to mine otherness  
From every item of mine earth to-day,  
Affording godship unto each and each  
Neither as units of plurocracy  
Nor yet as emptiness, Brahmanic void.  
The dialectic were superfluous  
In pettier detail. All the soul doth need

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

For self-establishment were just the need  
Of each for each, within its actual place  
Thereby defined, thereby concluding all  
In individuals each determinate :  
Each individual determinately  
An universe, conclusive, spiritual.  
Or mind or matter may within the spirit  
Be truthfulest ; but both are immanent  
Each truth in sort : ' mind ', as I feel my world  
A soul-establishment, germane to self ;  
' Matter ', as that same world concludeth me  
And so hath semblance of an outward thing  
Compulsive and beyond my private power.  
But world is my determinative self  
At growth, at dialectic if you will,  
Yet absolute through all sans over-lord.  
The problem of such time-eternal soul  
Were manifold, a process scarce for me  
To formulate, though hinted of him here —  
This Hegel who has work'd within me now.  
I for an hour have grasp'd the great insight,  
Have given it speech within my heart : a system  
Of earth as earth is, spiritual, self-contain'd  
Yet nowise naked of variety :

## EMERSON

A system, self-containment which is beauty,  
The beauty that my creed hath wholly miss'd. —  
Thus doth my quiet Concord keep its flow  
In varying, determinate contrast  
With this green land. And thus are land and sky  
Still fitly pictured from my station here  
Whose sweet familiarity of view  
Fills an horizon proven my very soul  
Replete with meaning for my daily thought  
Now sanction'd beyond stain of indolence. —  
Thus am I risen through nature unto God.

## WORDSWORTH

IT is a world serenely white ; a sky,  
Whence snow hath lately fallen, palest blue.  
And only where some craggy fell uprears  
Too steep a slope for crystal covering  
Doth earth show anywhere unto the sky  
Its customary face. Save for yon bluff  
Of perpendicular uprise seems world  
No mortal struggling ; but undying peace  
Spread dedicate to God. And I, alone  
Of this high-moulded summit, like some cloud,  
Of which God's heaven were the home, find here  
A place not unlike home, a station'd rest  
Unto my soul, whence earth, mine earth and God's,  
Spreads patently a picture of the truth  
Of life immortal.

Yet yon scrags none less  
Are earth's, are God's ; and seem eternally  
At struggling ; mortal by their every move  
And wasting ; as, save for this snow-of-an-hour,  
This covering of a momentary creed,  
Were earth all struggling up unto the clouds  
Which, sea-begotten, bear unto these hills

## WORDSWORTH

Oblivion but scarce serenity. —

What were that immortality of labor

Which must be earth's ; and, being earth's, be God's

And mine ; which, snowless, peaceless, yet were some

Sufficient satisfaction to the soul ?

A growth, a flowering of these grassy fells

When the high sun is quickening, and meanwhile

A waiting, patient and expectant thus

Not for this simulated peace of pure

Pale sky and sheeted snow, but for those laws

Which in the course of God's diurnal year

Make snow, as rain and sun, by wear and wash,

Frost-wrench and tempest-wrack, to quicken earth

Sea-born and struggling ? — Is there any peace ?

Lo ! I have dream'd of life-immortal as

A peace ; and came, to brood over these snows

As o'er a world not stale and customary

In mystic ecstasy. But now I feel me

No mere peace here ; no immortality

Of form and function, yet no worker in it ;

Of pale Nirvana, heaven beyond a world ;

Rather, some heaven's-own substance, yea, sea-born

And struggling, fallen over earth's scarr'd face

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

To soften, not conceal, suggest, not cover  
From understanding and intelligence,  
The peace and immortality, the presence  
Of God within His world and each of us  
As each is worker and his works have life :  
Despite all momentary creed of life  
Beyond the grave and God beyond His world ;  
A symbol of the eternity in time,  
Each moment, even conclusive of times all :  
Yea, of the wonder of accustom'd things. —  
Thus turn I and descend ; take up mine earth  
Anew, cured of the mystic quietism.  
Thus take I up the task with eye indeed  
Uplift unto these mountains whence hath come  
This help, ennobling labor and the strife  
Of serious contemplations. For each task  
I sense for some stage of the strenuous soul's  
Good growth in wisdom, never ceasing, not  
One instant to be wholly overlaid  
By any snow-oblivion ; but where rear'd  
Aloft, distinct and startling, there most meant  
Of every cloud-wrack, every fog o' the sea,  
As even of each intervale and glen  
Snow-sleeping. I descend ; but learn each task



## WORDSWORTH

Serene but by insistent earnestness ;  
Eternal by an infinite influence  
Essential in the task, not born of it ;  
An absolute inference, divinely high,  
Wide, deep and strong through all God's elsewhere  
tasks  
Of earth and men. And thus a task of God  
Immortal and appropriate to peace.

## THOREAU

THOUGH scant ten furlongs here from human home,  
Here are there creatures only of the wood :  
Now with the coming of the fall's first frost  
As not whilst man moved in the summer fields  
Am I alone anthropomorphic here. —  
Scarce sign from any beast hath been since dusk  
Closed in around. No sound from world without me  
Save wash of the glimmering lonely lake with cry  
Of far-off loon more lonely, or the surge  
Of wind in the trees ; and constant crackle, flap  
Of the camp-fire flame. The half-moon waxing  
sweeps  
Westward ; the stars, Orion following on,  
Pass o'er me : me alone with my fed flame.  
For this is an espousal of the woods :  
I and primordial fire at last alone. —

Once had I desire of better bridal. But  
'T was contrary decreed. And I am wed  
To these alone, I mateless of my kind ;  
I fronted by the problem — is it of God,  
That mutual insight men may best name Love ? —

## THOREAU

Of mates inanimate — a divine of Nature,  
But no divinity of human kind !  
I sole anthropomorphic ; and my God  
Of daily human help to me denied.  
The question is if God, denied to me  
In social longings toward my nobler kind,  
Be God, be yet divine here as of these :  
Whether love's insight be of beast and branch  
Admissibly as seems for me ordain'd.  
The question might not come upon a man  
Whose marvelous desire of marriage might  
Attain fulfillment : that the social strength  
Might daily, hourly wed with social strength  
Of insight and perception similar  
And thus might learn world-sanctity of both  
By individuation (heart with heart  
In the union) soul from soul — the humane God !  
I had built altars to the humane God,  
Had ne'er been stoical, aloof, remote  
As now : I was not born the cynic — but  
Now is it come upon me by my fate  
And must be met alone by me of men  
(Not openly in works I make for men)  
Unto myself and for the saving of

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

My universe by me possess'd alone,  
And of my heart which only earth may hold.  
How feel divinity of me and mine  
Denied the prime anthropomorphic truth  
Of mutual insight mutually defined ? —  
I am then mated with primordial flame,  
A creature of the woods, a beast, a branch  
Whilst none less human. Is such life divine ?

I may not find in this primordial flame,  
These dim sky-neighboring tree-tops, nor the stars  
Nor painted moon, nor these ensanguined leaves  
Of the flickering fire-lit circle, that intent  
Of mutual recognition, divination  
Which in the hold of human heart in heart  
Directly meaneth God and tells of Him  
Transcendent wholeness of the immediate soul.  
My spirit, yea, so much more than comprehends  
The pitiful simplicity of these  
( 'Soe'er complex to mere analysis ! ),  
Is still so much alone beyond their strength  
Of social sympathy that I must needs  
Deny of these direct associates  
The marks indicative of self-sublime

## THOREAU

Spirituality, of reverence  
Unto my soul acclaiming them its own.  
These are not-mine because they know not me  
Nor feel me more than as some clod of earth,  
Some miasm or some wandering holocaust,  
Some dread, some danger and some death to them  
Uncomprehended in the workings of  
Its untoward power. Such is a man to these,  
If he be aught at all ; not known as man  
But as a beast, a branch (ay, mischief-working)  
Resourceful over any, but not in kind  
Anthropomorphic as I know my power.  
Unto a life uncognizant of man  
I cannot yield the title of divine —  
'Soe'er outspread to stellar systems, though  
In mine own sight of generality  
I be as nought within its size and strength  
As I am clod — such world were godless still.  
No Nature can be God. May I a man  
Shorn of God-kinship sink to atheism,  
Yield me unto the truth of earth and these ?

I doubt me if such godlessness be truth,  
Or earth, as such earth-fact, be fact at all !

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Earth may, as I, within and for itself  
In each least detail mean an universe  
Similar in a spirituality  
Minuter merely, in a self-detail  
Less complex in recomplication, yet  
Entire, so whole, divine, wherein my manhood  
Finds plain acceptance as I, being a clod,  
Am clod-wise spiritual and enshrined of these ?  
Yea, in the subtler scheme this difference  
Of fact anthropomorphic from the fact  
Vegetal, chemical (distinction final  
And therefore perfecting, requiring all  
Distinguish'd facts in definition for  
Each intimate essence), yea, were final proof  
In either sort respectively of earth's  
As even of man's conclusive personal scope  
Of consciousness interminable, each —  
Within its absolute series qualitative —  
So guaranteed fulfill'd omniscience.  
I then am godly by my recognition  
In sympathetic insight not alone  
Of personalities so similar  
As like for like for my faith to return  
But herein and more widely, readily

## THOREAU

By insight of an earth whose term distinct  
As otherwise than mine I yet acknowledge  
A sympathy, an active interest  
Creatively, which mine creator-wise  
Must reconstruct to realize at all.  
So either way, by bridal or by espousal  
Even of the flame primordial, world and I  
Detect a fundament, simplification  
Of reconciliation, self-support  
In mutual antithesis reclaim'd.  
So I alone anthropomorphic here  
Am godly though my God no more may be  
Anthropomorphic ; though this earth of beast  
And branch and fed fire and the stars on high  
Be neither earth nor star as men have dream'd  
Condemning them to clodliness unsoul'd  
As man they fancied alone worthy God !

Such have I learn'd by biding but apart  
A moment, some few furlongs from my kind  
As, fate commanding, hath my spirit craved  
Toward learning new God in default of old.  
The Deity I learn of wilderness  
Were scarce the deity of human home

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Secrete from wilderness. For man 'mid man  
Associate in clanship and in creeds  
Ecclesiastic seeth but with an eye  
Sole to man's interest at the best, denying  
All rights and interests of his weaker kind  
(And thus denying much of man's own soul !)  
Unrecognized for kith and kin through God,  
Through contrast and through insight each in sort.  
Lo ! my desire of marriage, once fulfill'd  
(Save she my mate anthropomorphic had  
With me espoused the fire primordial here !)  
Had barr'd my spirit forever from the truth  
Of God the uttermost entirety  
(By characteristic quality absolute)  
Of each world-system : each yet infinite  
Because, within itself, from other selves  
Interminably distinctive through the whole  
Of star-stuffs, earth and beasts and branches each  
Anthropomorphic only as my heart  
Of man is soul beyond such lesser souls,  
More complicate of quality, more God.  
Yet thus are the creatures of the forest godly  
As I ; and God, that insight best call'd Love,  
Immanent in us all, as each is nowise



## THOREAU

Other and thus defineth self by each. —  
I had desire of better bridal, but  
'T was contrary decreed. And I at last  
Acknowledge Nature and am not alone ;  
Am cynic never, and still dedicating  
My work to man, yea, though aloof, remote.  
Yet, had I wedded, haply then through her  
Some inward soul-distinction had been seen  
More intimate : more marking me as man  
Above not-man ; more marking Truth for God ?

## BROWNING

STRANGE, sudden, startling, that my book should  
be

‘Proven belovèd, demonstrably held  
‘At heart’s core of the cultured ; popular  
‘Of the public’. Ay, my publishers ‘besieged  
‘For reprints’.—Here, these scribblings from the  
post

Fervent, frenetic ; yea, as utterly  
Super-appreciative, wide of the mark  
Of a just estimate, as hitherto  
In complementary infelicities  
My critics crush’d me. Had I done those things  
Men cursed me for, this craziness had come  
Scarce sooner. Had I left but more undone  
The things they condescendingly approve  
Should I adopt them mine, still had I held  
Inviolable my private sanctity  
Of sure self-judgment ; nor been overwhelm’d  
With this effusiveness. — ’T is all well meant,  
Doubtless. ’T is yet distressingly apart  
From principles of poetry and strength.  
While it was scorn, I could work dogged-wise

## BROWNING

In equipoise ; sad that my verse should be  
Miscomprehended ; certain none the less  
That nor miscomprehension, nor the laws  
They arrogantly promulgated might  
Alter one whit the care-felt speech of soul  
I seriously expatiated. Now  
That somewhat of my soul hath seriously  
Touch'd them, 't is well, 't is justified : but yet  
Shakes it the equipoise. For I must see  
Equal miscomprehension ; sense how few  
Of all these sympathizers rightly feel  
True trend and purport of my poems. So  
Stand I alone ; not as before in sort  
To champion, urge consideration for  
A genuine intention — so proceed  
In work's assurance to redoubling work —  
But to be deprecator, advocate  
Of sterner estimate ; to work, if work  
At all, in self-distrust, decial of  
Inmost endeavoring. Now must I sit  
Idle awhile, now that success has come  
Half-sought, to buffet back these waves that would  
Wash out the individual estimate  
In general, blind, emotive, judgmentless

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Alleged community. Now must I weigh  
As ne'er before the meaning of my mind.

For I have from the first found tendency  
In all my verse toward individualism  
In a new manner. And 't were pertinent  
To my art-form were mine art-judgment quite  
Apart from critical tradition, sure  
Of self-criteria which yet should not be  
Eccentric nor beyond most views of men  
Unbalanced from an average estimate.  
I have thresh'd o'er and o'er within my brain  
Suggestions of insanity, have sought  
A thousand times discern incipient marks  
Of my diseased departure from the sense  
Of most of the cultured ; ay, when differing  
In personal opinion have I sought  
More keenly than best critic of them all  
So to detect opinion which might show  
No reasonable warrant, as to catch  
My judgment obviously wanton ; still  
Have by the skepticism but been led  
Further along the same criterial paths  
To more elaborately determinate

## BROWNING

Uncompromising non-conformity.  
Though, as it may be, I, regretting still  
Miscomprehension, have (as all men must)  
In some sort stultified my judgment, yearn'd  
For common ground ; portray'd — scarce by intent  
Deliberately acknowledged — in the speech  
And art-form of their pseudo-classic cult  
A characterization never quite  
The truth I 'd make it in a genuine art.  
Still, despite such scarce-conscious tendency  
To blur distinctions, seek communicancy  
And sanity at all cost, stand I sane  
In my firm non-conformity ; and would  
Deprecate too much comprehension, plead  
Mistake of fact in those who honestly  
Now are my flatterers and fancy fate  
Mixes men's spirits to absorbency  
Of personal irreducible self-poise.  
Nay, it is 'utterly determinate  
'This world of mine and thine ' — I catch myself  
Quoting my critics : they who fancied mine  
The mysticism ! Let me calmly face  
The paradox which leads me to maintain  
The very phrases of the enemy

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Over against the championing of friends.  
The paradox : How can determinism  
Of feature, universalism still  
Of purport, best be found in monologue  
(As this my monologue) of personal truth ?  
How avoid, on the one hand emptiness  
Of mystical inconsequence — a speech  
Of sentimental egotism without  
A world shown autovital ; on the other  
The piecemeal profitless rehearsal of  
My place and thine as to some chronicler  
Such acts appear ? Lo ! for the first were such,  
Based in immediate sensibility  
Lawless and orderless of any soul's,  
As these my new-made sycophants suppose  
They prove of me, a sheer community  
Sans dignified distinctiveness of person  
In ultimate judgment ; and the second were  
The classic dialogue or pluralogue  
Which, based in some supposed eternity  
Of ordering, dramatic poet's-truth,  
Tells no self-judgment, neither mine nor thine ;  
Unions no self-responsibility ;  
Presents, depicts, permits speak each a part

## BROWNING

The puppets of the scene — in no way mine  
Nor any person's ? — Let my monologue  
Dialogue-wise dramatically prove  
Its own supremacy in yielding place  
Subordinate to just their give and take.  
For, while I live, will yet my verses prove  
Their fresh sincerity. When I am not,  
Shall men arise to crush them ; and there be  
No comprehender who can say : 'T is truth.  
One shall arise, haply, obscure of name  
But cogent, facile, who shall say of me,  
With no one to dispute, what now no man  
Would dare maintain. Let me now answer him !

And he shall say : ' 'T were sheer vulgarity  
' Of personal opinion. This his speech  
' Of monstrous-mouth'd soliloquy but sets  
' World as he sees it, as he would it were  
' Or were not ; ay, characterizes all  
' By blindest passionate unestimate,  
' Nowise by ordering of art's cosmic scheme.  
' His were a poetry of barbarism,  
' Wanting establish'd canon, wanting art's  
' True objectivity, true beauty-speech

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

'Of reasoning humanity. How call  
'Such primitive, ay, protoplasmic rant —  
'Guiltless of symmetry, propriety  
'And absolute proportion — poetism  
'Of modern meaning? Rather is the world  
'Of modern meaning but affirming more  
'And more art's classic preëstablishment  
'Of real ideals, of eternal forms  
'Whereto our acts are moulded!' How shall I  
Fully consider, entertain and test  
This condemnation; who would yet condemn  
Myself for overclose conformity  
To just those unideal abstract terms  
Of outworn classicism he 'd uphold?

For in my first flash of self-sensate power  
I spoke, if youthfully, yet manly too  
My self forth in a person, thought and speech,  
Toward this Pauline, toward that Sordello; still  
Dramatic only by objective force  
Of my world-unioning in point of view  
Adaptive, recreative of the truth  
Call'd David's, Paracelsus': now mine own.  
Thus far a fair beginning in a form



## BROWNING

Not altogether novel, none the less  
Rational, genuine, believed in : my  
Speech in so far as I were merely self  
The lover, the narrator ; else my speech  
As I were David, Paracelsus. But  
Soon came the tempting of convention, soon  
The yielding to the outworn classicism  
Of playwright dialogue, the give and take  
Of puppet-persons, plausibly the speech  
Of powers not mine own which make for good  
Or evil sans responsibility  
Of mine for making every mouth speak truth.  
Such were the fallacy : an order'd scheme  
Beyond the poet's authorship ; a world  
Realistical imposed as from without  
On a mere chronicler : the gross mistake  
Of all mere classicism — general law  
The scapegoat for the puppets' fallings-short !  
Such were my Strafford, Luria, my Blot, ay,  
In the 'Scutcheon, Druses, Victor and King Charles ;  
Puppet-plays : if not perfect of their kind  
(Not mine such technic), 't was because I felt  
Fallacy : — I, the author, clean escaped  
From authorship ; my art alleged some world's !

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

And from the first the critics took to task  
My private personal self-poise ; alleged  
Even my forthright drama still too germane  
To individual bias ; branded those  
My people of their pseudo-classic cult,  
My Strafford, Tresham, Luria — but me ;  
'Mere puppets' (how all tongues cleave to that word !)  
Solely because too little puppet-like,  
Too self-contaminate ! — Too much mine own,  
Alive and genuine ! — And now the crowd  
Of sycophants, echoing critic-cry  
With counter-purport of approval, fawn,  
Flatter for my supposed escape at last  
From 'objectivity' ; 'pure sentiment  
'Of soul's immediate mysticism' express'd  
In 'allegory of my moods and aims',  
'Their' moods and aims by being conceived so vague  
As to fit none. Wherefore I stand appraised  
For an alleged yet rightly unperform'd  
'Subjectivism' ; and condemn myself  
Scarce for excessive objectivity  
As truth defines it, but for too close clutch  
Of the classic outward act, the puppet-speech  
Supposed not still mine own : the universal

## BROWNING

Not individual. So to the claim  
Of him I parley with I say at last :  
' Mine were too much the mere conformity  
' To general abstract conservatism  
' Of cultural tradition : losing thus  
' Art's genuine objectivity of self  
' Expressive through each puppet-circumstance,  
' Determinate but universal too.  
' If the first crude essay, the youthful whim,  
' Were too much lover, not enough Pauline ;  
' Narrator, scarce Sordello ; yet the truth  
' Lies in development toward surer speech  
' Like David's, Paracelsus' : now mine own  
' As their truth should be, would be, were they now  
' Citizens of my century in time  
' Contemporaneous at soul with us.  
' Which in a sort they were ; my ought-to-be  
' (Ultimate standard of all truth in art)  
' But an implied development through theirs.  
' So, to your worn-out classicism, the cult  
' Of chronicle, of puppet plausibly  
' Speaking his law-taught part, accusing fate  
' Else calling on the gods ; never at soul  
' Protagonizing : " I, responsible,

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

“ “ Am fate, the gods ; my world of circumstances  
“ “ Is mine alone, and mine alone the chance  
“ “ To right it, comprehend it and explain  
“ “ Before all men a world intelligible  
“ “ Not extra-orderly, but through and through  
“ “ Self-comprehensive ” : such is my reply :  
    ‘ Sir, misinterpret not my first attempts  
    ‘ Too little worldly-wise to self-explain  
    ‘ A circumstance not worthy a grown soul ;  
    ‘ Nor set for standard of my full-grown art  
    ‘ A pseudo-classicism never quite  
    ‘ Self-felt, germane ; so not my world at all,  
    ‘ Nor any’s. But accept for best at last  
    ‘ These new ; now press-prepared, else waxing quick  
    ‘ Beneath my pen, fledging from out my brain,  
    ‘ To stand or fall with me ; my soul’s-own world,  
    ‘ As utmost apprehension sets it right,  
    ‘ In circumstance and scenery to suit  
    ‘ Great situations of imagining —  
    ‘ Proportion’d, symphonied and symmetrized  
    ‘ By self-poise, universal, intricate  
    ‘ Yet only thereby total, infinitely  
    ‘ A self-sustaining, autovital art —  
    ‘ My truliest life : my Guido, Andrea,

## BROWNING

‘ Caliban, John, Giuseppi, and the Pope,

‘ Lippo, Pompilia, and Balaustion !’

Who shall have set world forth as I shall speak it,  
My world, a world by being so worldly-mine ?  
No shrinkage to an insignificant  
Mere sentimental maundering to catch  
The silly sycophants ; no cowardly  
Cord-twitching that the marionettes may dance  
Nor show the showman — him who made them so !  
Who shall be stronger, still must ease his strength  
As I, in speaking self forth in the speech  
Of great souls, great by self-poised circumstance,  
Not blindly passion-warp'd, but more and more  
Personal, comprehensive of world-life !

## MATTHEW ARNOLD

NOW the swift sun in heaven wins day by day  
A loftier light ; earth in her laboring now  
Increaseth hourly ; and all things seem  
To breathe in strenuousness of taking on  
New burden, new responsibility  
By very virtue of aspiring lift  
And spring of the year : that rest is far from all :  
That yearning after dreams is a dead thing.  
Yea, such were life, to wax and be inform'd  
Of manifold new meaning constantly,  
And only so to understand content.  
Lo ! what containment, what satiety,  
What organ'd equipoise, what peace preserved  
In high endeavor endlessly renew'd !  
I have endeavor'd ; but have not known peace.  
I have had peace in purpose, hence have miss'd  
it.

I have endeavor'd autumnwise to be  
A winter of some statued mould and form  
By outworn dignity, by antique pose  
False to a modern mission. — Let me be  
Mobile as May-world ; myriad, manifold

## MATTHEW ARNOLD

As blades and blossoms. Let me weigh now well  
The modern meaning. Let me learn my soul.

It is the old, old word : this, ' Know Thyself ' ;  
Stale as their Greek confusion of that self  
With ' me ' or ' thee '. And I have feign'd some Greek,  
Impersonated some atomic mould  
Of private purpose ; whilst my social worldhood  
Was yet not of me ; in the strife of things  
Been soul-impassible, been stoic-strong  
By cowardly evasion ; else have been  
But deprecator, ay, conservative  
Of truths whose needed conservation proved  
Their incompatibility with now,  
Their falsity as I have sought them. Yet  
My self, my person now must be the world  
Of modern implication, a self-world,  
Yea ; and a spring-world, as the soul of the year  
Is spring, not autumn nor earth's wintering.  
As the swift sun in heaven shall be my song  
Of liberal assumption, taking on me  
The burden as a blessing of all functions  
Fallen to the now-born ! Was the song of old —  
So simple-sane, so mystic-mythical ! —

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

A cowardly avoidance of such creed  
And cult as yonder Sophocles might deem  
Crux of an uttermost modernity ?  
Were any work that seems so chaste, so far  
From tumult of an actuality,  
By any peradventure meant to prove  
Evasive of soul's daily intercourse  
And stint of due perplexity of path ?  
Could any art be whole by emptiness?  
Was not the world then old, the soul as young  
To grasp it, as are now my world, my soul ?  
Quick both, as pictured in this passing spring ?

Never were beauty a mere contemplation,  
Nor God a reminiscence. If I fail  
To find in models of our modern art  
Criterion for satisfaction, if  
These creeds and formulæ of churches stick  
In the throat, am I then left alone of the world  
A misplaced pagan, Phidias born too late ?  
No man were born misplaced, none sprung too late  
Out of the sun-lift and the lap of life  
Which bringeth forth in season every thing !  
But with the still-increasing flux of earth



## MATTHEW ARNOLD

Evolve art and belief, develop form  
And function of our loftiest intellect  
In vastest grasp and passion. As we be  
Now a new world that stands not satisfied  
With God-beyond ; shall God-within-the-world  
Be any metaphor call'd Zeus indeed ?  
Shall God be of the world as I and these  
Though not divinity of them nor me ?  
Shall mine Empedocles absorb my soul  
To atheism and contempt, that art  
And God-creeds need renewing ? Rustum were  
The nobler puppet, who fought out his life  
To tragedy but not to cynicism.  
Oh, for some theme of modern-made idea  
Which, matching spring in inborn novelty,  
Stands ever old, older than Zeus or men  
By being to-day divine, some world-device  
Of absolute soulship speaking in the mouth  
Of me, not Rustum nor Empedocles !  
No Tyrian trader from the world shall hoard  
His splendor for salvation, no dismay  
Shall rant on flame-bursts, nor to element  
Resign the soul ! But something of a faith  
In understanding of a modern mood

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Shall mean God most in complications sprung  
Of fluxion, spring-life and the lift of earth  
Inevitable. And my theme shall be  
Thus Greek, thus Phidian, Æschylus anew  
By dealing in the plain, spontaneous,  
Self-language of the times, most pure, least foul  
With obsolete inheritance of myth's  
Equivocation ; meaning that I mean.  
Thus, then, shall all this frail agnostic cant  
Find autumn's place ; and if the creed be worn  
Be there renewal seeded of the fall.  
Let the new creed afford right meaning for  
The creed rejected, let the new art show  
Old myth subordinant, old metaphor  
But outworn fact : thus, the new fact full truth. —

Now the swift sun in heaven wins all my soul  
To spring-truth and soul-cycle of the year.  
In creed and art, no skeptical dismay  
More, nor withdrawal from the market-place  
And sphere of high contention faith with faith !  
Here is earth's wonderful sweet market-place  
Of blossoming contention — 'would my soul  
Had learn'd herself so as a world of men !

## GORDON

'I CAME, not to bring peace, but with a sword !' —  
Would that some power might bring Christ's  
sword to me !

His peace I look not for : and yet I came  
To bring these deserts peace and not a sword.

How strangely turns our goodwill among men  
Into a hate and mockery of love —  
A hate without and mockery within  
These walls that I have built about men's homes !  
How came I hither, if with sword to show  
Uncoward aspect, yet with peace at heart  
Intended unto all — at worst, a sword  
For those without my walls ! And now at last  
Here gaze I yearning toward that folk (which  
did  
So long forget past years) that they'll but  
bring  
Power to rid me of my seeming friends  
Whom I mistrust more than mine enemies.  
Ay, treachery within and foes without  
This leaguer'd city augur some swift peace

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Indeed unto my spirit. Though I seek  
No peace ; but, as the Master said, a sword.

Not for myself indeed I seek that sword.  
My life were well-nigh ended, and well-spent  
In serving somewhat Christ and these poor crowds  
Of desert people. But that at the last  
My work should end, not in some forthright breach  
With those who will not love me nor my ways,  
But in the simulance of fellowship,  
A stab in the dark, a thrust, a sneer ; and all  
Is fallen of the fabric I had rear'd,  
Here among Christless folk, of Christian's faith :  
Fabric I fain had rear'd of man to man  
Open and honest if not brotherly —  
Such work to end as Judas ended once  
A nobler ! Let it be. The comfort comes  
In the meek parallel : my goal as His.

So we start forth in singleness of soul  
To live straightforward, act and speak what best  
Is in us honest and above regard  
For what the world would have us speak and act  
Save as we judge best to be understood

## GORDON

Aright and meet men on men's common ground.  
But somewhere we must swerve. As when I came  
Declaring mine a sword, though peace at heart  
Was in me. — Was it not also in Christ ?  
Was Jesus' end by treachery because  
He scarce might wield a sword He would not wear  
While yet proclaiming warfare to the world ?  
Is mine impending doom this that it is,  
Even with the night that falleth now upon  
This turbulent city, but because I came  
No longer open with a sword at heart,  
Else peace upon my brow to match my soul ;  
And so destroy'd the fabric of a faith  
In single purpose by my double deed ?

Christ, I accept the desperate consequence  
As Thou acceptedst. For I too forswore  
My singleness of spirit. — Shall a man  
Do otherwise, die otherwise : than Thou ?

## MOHAMMED AHMED

A PROPHECY. Let the scribes write it down  
Even as I speak it. For it is my last : —

God and the Prophet and myself I preach  
In provident succession. He who comes  
After me, Abdullahi here, shall preach  
God and the Prophet and myself the same,  
Who am the true Imam. And over me  
Shall Abdullahi rear the tomb which I  
Have founded ; and shall make it as I now  
Declare in vision. For the length and breadth  
By cubits shall be equal ; but the height  
Somewhat exceeding, as the heavens are high  
Arch'd above earth's flat floor whereon we dwell.  
And in the side-walls be there entrances  
To signify my body still with men.  
Only, about the whole be built a yard  
And a well dug ; for this were holy ground.  
Finally at the centre based upon  
Those inner arches shall be raised aloft  
First a pure prism of six crystalline sides  
To indicate my clarity of mind

## MOHAMMED AHMED

And so approach the perfect spherical  
Which heavenlike is my soul ; domed, yea, and gold. —  
Such is the prophecy. And let the scribes  
Prepare it for decree publicly read  
As my last utterance from God amending  
Those earlier prophecies foregone of how  
Mine end were elsewhere. — Ah, but even at once  
Mine end approacheth. I would be alone,  
Well rid of earth, with Abdullahi here  
(Son of my spirit !) to confer on him,  
Whilst none shall witness, my firman from God. —

Are we alone ? — Friend Abdullahi, thou  
Knowest how I have longtime sought release  
From this hypocrisy which we have made  
My pitiful substance. But I fear'd the fall,  
First, of myself — what have I now to fear  
Who feel the worst, the bitterness of death ? —  
Then, of this mighty empire we have rear'd  
In men's credulity. I leave to thee  
A dangerous and a bitter task ; and yet  
Somewise an easier. For myself have been,  
If push'd by thee yet still responsibly,  
The main impostor. Thou needst but adore

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

The dome thou buildest o'er me ; and the rest  
Is plain oppression, grateful to thy soul.  
I pity, ay, thy people more than thee !  
Temper the tyranny : 't will longer last  
Than if the superstition be too strain'd.

The superstition ! How, oft-whiles, I think  
Of those days when the inspiration seem'd,  
And was, from God ; then when at Abba Isle  
I taught in absolute humility  
Truths of my spirit, what I rightly knew  
Concerning manhood and the way of life  
(Oppression, Abdullahi, was my scorn !)  
Fit for my soul, and therefore fit that men  
Should hear it and be privileged to try  
Whether to choose their way of life like mine.  
God is so good, He gives the truth to each  
So perfectly adapted to the need,  
He makes it seem as though some truth for all  
Alike were vouchsafed : though such is not so,  
Mine Abdullahi. But it came to me  
As if my ministry (thus Moslem folk  
Are ever dreaming !) was, to every man  
The same, a revelation ; though forsooth



## MOHAMMED AHMED

The lowliest Dongolawi of them all  
Hath truth in some degree for him as true  
As for me mine. I know this plainly now.  
For, as death comes and feverish heat abates,  
Are the eyes open'd. — Whence, this woof of lies  
Which I have woven, prophecies and worse,  
If not in effort I have made that men  
Believe as I believe, whether or no  
Their circumstance and each intelligence  
Of sense and reason may condemn my creed  
Available for me but not for them?  
For thus have I forsworn my privacy  
As theirs of final judgment each unique;  
And thus deprived my faith of honesty.  
Whence, mine undue assumption? mine, who  
    preach  
Humility and abstinence, yet grasp  
A god's immunity from any law  
Save satisfaction of my pride and lust? —  
God are we, Abdullahi; but not gods!

Thou, Abdullahi, knowest even as I  
Whereof we build our empire here on earth.  
Nor wilt thou dream I rave. But thou wilt pray

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

With me that God be gracious, and my faults  
Be visited not on them who had faith  
When first I felt and taught the word of God—  
The woof of God, I say, though now false-warp'd  
From the fine fabric that my life had been !

I leave it, then, to thee, the awful task

To save this people from the ire of God  
As I have roused it. Canst thou find a way?  
Even the old hypocrisy ? 'T were best.

\* We are too far in treachery to try  
New ways of singleness. The folk we fool  
Were leaderless, wert thou less false than I. —  
Fear, save for them, shall now be flung far from  
me,

Though worse for me may come than this of death !

Spare but the tyranny ; 't is all I ask.

Bear no consideration for my soul.

Absolve me from no sins of blasphemy

By ruining this empire ! Rather burn'd

I in hell-fire a thousand years and one

Than earn heaven by apostasy of thine

When earth depends still on the perfect fraud !

Therefore I tell thee that the sin is best.

'T will save them from themselves lest they awake

MOHAMMED AHMED

To learn the great deception, and go mad !

For thee, like me, 't were late : our souls are lost. —

Call them to witness of my latter end.

## TENNYSON

NOW in the eve and twilight of mine age  
I turn to see what stadia I have pass'd  
In the world's road, if any. And my year  
Hath pass'd and many seasons over me ;  
That winter now approacheth. But my path,  
Though beautiful in autumn retrospect,  
Shows not so long — despite the lengthening haze —  
As I in journeying along it deem'd.  
If a straight path, yet are there backward feet,  
'T would seem, and many turnings on the road,  
Wanderings aside and strange reluctances  
Of yearning memory : a fear, through all,  
Of these, those 'other faces', 'other minds',  
Which now close in about me. Though the school  
Applaud and love, I, with mine old-age sight  
Of tendencies and meanings hitherto  
Unseen, can in nowise applaud my way.  
A way the blind, the halt, the backward turn'd  
Might travel for its smoothness which the feet  
Of me with many stumblings, much retread,  
Wrought to the road where men so oft before  
Had journey'd ; but no onway hewn among

## TENNYSON

The noble all-embracing lonelinesses  
Of earth-uplifting solitary thought. —  
I have been solitary to my shame :  
Though spoil'd with much laudation, yet alone  
In self and spirit, strange unto a world  
Which strain'd beyond me ; and came back to rest  
Unto my bosom but for ease and sleep,  
Forgetful of day's onward dignities.  
Sweet were the uses of conservancy,  
Of backward-yearning and the requiem  
Which autumn yields the year. Sweet the smooth path  
Of verbal dalliance, wide simplicities :  
The cowardice which, Platonizing still,  
Apes the eternal verities outworn !  
Life were not retrospect. Yet all my life  
Hath inwardly but been as retrospect.  
Now let my final retrospect absolve  
The blame ; mine old age be not — Tithonus !  
For, lo ! my soul hath been as Tithonus',  
Not as Odysseus'. Let Odysseus' be  
My yearning now toward ocean without end.

Ah, but a truce to antique imagery ;  
Peace, peace to the dead language ! Let my tongue

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Speak plain, not mouth Lucretius ; find a speech  
Of modern manner, nor mistake mine own  
Bewilderment and latter pessimism —  
Echo of Latin atomist despair —  
For wise modernity ! Were Galahad  
Or Launcelot, that tale of Guinevere ;  
Were Arthur with his old companionship  
(Trite types whose generality would serve  
For almost any purpose, any proof :  
And hence are false to any in themselves !)  
Plain speech, an earnest prophecy of world  
Within me, truth-expression of the strong  
Whose beauty is by self-determinate grasp  
Of literal apprehension — in the flower  
Of the cranny, God and all ? Or were my richest,  
Most perfect, most elaborated piece  
Most a veil'd utterance, most overlaid  
With mystery : a dimness ? Yea, that I  
Did once speak plainly all the truest of me  
Is little wonderful : when memory, ah,  
Regret — with consolations obsolete,  
Suggestions of an heartening in faith  
Itself a mystery, itself most veil'd —  
Were all the stuff and splendor of that song !

## TENNYSON

The rest were negligeable ; though well-made,  
Mere household saws, mere suave urbanities  
(Men still will praise : ' Those fair humanities ' ! )  
Letter'd, polite, taught in the academe ;  
Not stuff of strength nor splendor of the soul.  
For I, I was not prophet of the times. —  
There was another, one whose verse but seem'd  
Uncouth, that I despised it at my heart.  
Yet, how he moved on past the lagging throng  
In freedom and in grandeur of plain speech !  
His very manner now is at my tongue  
As truth pleads in me to be up and heard !  
Beyond him I divine some statelier verse  
(As yet unmade, if ever to be made ?)  
Of splendid-surgings insight, some new power  
(By God-abandonment) of finding godship  
In personal conscience of an unique world  
Wherein no man is instance of the rest :  
But each concludes by definition all :  
Plain speech become beauty by absoluteness ?  
'T were sole alternative to cynicism.  
'T were autumn, no ; nor winter, nor the spring,  
Nor any season ; but the round of all  
Concentred, focus'd to the eternal year ! —

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

His was a spring. Could some humility  
In me have hail'd in him my complement ! —

With the fair, fine return of every autumn,  
Of autumn in its lingering retrospect  
When each reverted day reluctantly  
Leaveth itself behind, have I been moved  
Increasingly toward song : that now I sing  
For ultimate autumn my confessional.  
For something in the season aye hath been  
My special inspiration. I have sung  
If most-part of the springtime, summer's flood  
And wintry barrenness ; yet aye the ebb  
Of retrospection and of lingering  
Hath been my burden, message of my word.  
If melancholy loveliness I leave  
To those that are bewilder'd with the world  
As I : dim richness as of Camelot  
Seeming to them Avilion's own vale  
(Avilion, may be, but not quick earth) ;  
Idalian Oenone, only dreams  
Of modern plasticism unalive —  
A mourning yet for antique faiths outworn,  
A living life but in the lost of things,



## TENNYSON

A Romanhood when Rome is not the world! —  
I have call'd halt and turn'd but in my mire.  
I see some souls which leap out of this slough  
Of mean dismay: accepting all now proven  
Of unity, automatism, of each  
New subtler involution of one clay  
From nebula to poet; yet insisting  
The nebulous material thus proven  
Pole but of spirit. Subtler doctrines still  
Evolve and involve from the lost belief:  
Involving no lost dignity to man  
Free of a maker: Somewhat self-made still; .  
Not myrmidon of nescience as I fear'd!  
I see some souls thus best conserving truth  
By ever journeying on truth's new way. —  
But I, I have no motion of mine own:  
Save if my motion be by retrogress,  
My mild despair be still some share of light  
Illumining reflectively the faith  
Whence future light shall spring and be renew'd:  
My movelessness (through all that was of strength)  
At last avow'd, proving my motion now.  
Yea, though I am not now such strength as in  
Old days bewail'd but earth and fear'd for heaven,

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Such as I am, I am : knowing myself.  
So have I gather'd up all left behind  
Like to the wholeness of the onrolling year ;  
That there is no regret : but onwardness.

## WYCKOFF

WEEKS, months, and years at laboring with these hands  
Of mine untrain'd to toil have well-nigh used  
Muscles and sinews to the manual work,  
Callous'd the skin, stiffen'd the horny grasp;  
Subdued frame, fingers, almost brain beside  
To fitness for the nerve-mechanical  
Brute task; made brawn the measure of my might;  
Man, physic-mass! — Experiment's success?  
Well-nigh pure proxihood's reality? —  
Some way the day's fatigue, the listlessness  
Of unrewarded search (though scarce despair  
By any fear to starve), relaxing brawn  
Here as I stumble restward through the dusk,  
Indeed mere outcast of the unemploy'd,  
Areek with sweat, dinn'd with the city's roar,  
Unnerves the tense-strung sinew, frees the brain  
Momently for the dubious questioning;  
Confronts soul with the skepticism; lays bare  
Depths of a void denial. Sole alone  
Halt I amid the throng where by the bridge  
Shadowy sweeps with sluggish sullenness  
The city's sink and sewer: I, of these

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Millions of maul'd humanities, one soul —  
Despite soul's uttermost insistency  
At comradeship and merging to their mould —  
A solitary and a loneliness  
Doom'd as yon river to receive yet scarce  
Assimilate; acknowledge all the stew  
And stink and crime, the sin; assume their filth,  
Take tinge and city-substance (as these hands  
Harden to tint of turmoil) yet stream onward  
A solitary and a power alone  
By weakness, by incapability  
Of fixedness, adoption of the fact  
Of any other; but — a glimmering doubt —  
Sweep on and hold no permeant cognizance  
Of city, shadow and flare. Even so my soul  
Incapable of proxihood steals on;  
Rouses and wakes, as with a lightless depth  
Of dismal fluxion, to the finite lore:  
'Not I, but thou, thou rank'd humanity  
'Of city-stricture and mechanic pain,  
'Suffering, pitiable; not my soul  
'For any forced assumption of thy wrongs!'

Weeks, months and years! yet labor as I may

## WYCKOFF

Still miss I proxihood : experiment  
Fail'd of perfection ! — I, the flesh'd and eased  
In worldly circumstance, yet sensed and fill'd  
Of the physical sufferance of man-made-beast ;  
I, scientist, philosopher, wide known  
And widelier knowing, yet with ache and pang  
Of the pinch'd, impoverish'd, prevented souls  
Of mass'd humanity, by sympathy  
Tortured, o'erwhelm'd ; conceiving passionately  
A mission, duty to be done for these ;  
Desiring so, and reasoning to attain  
More intimate insight of men's distress  
The abler to make proselyte the world  
To ways of reparation : did put off  
(Even as yon river, swirl'd to tortured pool,  
Lamps, in default of motion, mirror-lights)  
All circumstance of comfort and mine ease  
Laboring brute-like with the herd. — Saith not  
Christ, ' Lift the stone and ye shall find me ' ? —

So

Sought I to lift and stir the stone, thereby  
Christlike for vicar to assume the soul  
(Even as yon whirlpool by the mock-lamp'd lights)  
Of man-made-brute ; to raise by love man's least.

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Weeks, months and years : and still the soul-made-brute-like

(Better or worse than brute, it matters not)  
Of mankind mass'd and mired is by no means  
Mine; nor the proxihood: experiment  
Daily more futile, daily more remote  
From pure adoption, adequate insight  
Of the menial misery. At this twilight hour  
Lonely along dull-glimmering curbs I go  
Half-fed, unkempt, craving the primal curse  
Of labor, longing but the natural right  
To toil: an outcast of the unemploy'd!  
Yet, in man's uttermost distress'd estate,  
No mere man-scum: at stand here by the brink  
No city: river-like sensitive indeed  
To loneliness; to love forlornness means!  
Failure foredoom'd! And in this hour I feel  
Fatuity of any vicarage,  
Insight, nay sympathy: and am at heart  
Love's contradiction, deeming futile all  
Approximation and all guardianship.  
Can I, incapable of bosoming  
Feature or fashion of the souls I'd ape  
(As lights flare but from surface of yon stream),

## WYCKOFF

Blind to oblivion of mine old estate  
Which was mine and remains — but should not  
so —

A standard fix'd for strain'd comparison  
Warping the actualization, thwarting real  
Appreciation (as yon river hoards  
High mountain-outlook) of the prison pain,  
The absoluteness of this cursed estate  
(City but city and no gloried gorge) —  
So false (and no criterion obtains  
For fault's correction) to this state assumed:  
Can I, in ignorance of the true distress  
(Bound to the ignorance by mountain-birth),  
In error at diagnosis of disease  
Pander prescription, seek make proselyte  
World to a reparation; when redress  
Aims at an end uncognizable, wills  
Cure for complaint (this city stands unproved  
By gleam nor scum) no postulate shall prove?  
Ay, grant their case be none so desperate  
As sympathy conceived (the cataract's  
Too crude anticipation), grant how brute  
Being brute (if brute be brutish plausibly)  
Could scarce appreciate the solitude,

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Nor man-mere-brute with mine intensity  
(This stagnant city with this stream's strain'd  
sweep)

Confront forlornness and feel finitude!  
It boots not, scarce affects fatuity  
Of proxihood and pure experiment.  
Yield the contention ; can I possibly  
Acquire precise criterion the more  
Through recognizing how criterion  
Varies, a fluxion ; mine expectancy  
Of solitude and finiteness, apart  
From any solitude and finiteness  
The solitary and the finitude  
Could comprehend nor yet belie their name ? —  
City see city seen from mountain-side?  
Absurdity! Yet city stands none less  
Beyond (beneath, above, indifferent which)  
All possibility of stream's insight  
Of city-scum, of city-flare as fix'd  
And irremediable, strictured. So  
Strictured and irremediable, fix'd  
Flows lone yon river, lone between brick'd banks! —  
Ay, what though case be none so desperate ?  
'T is yet the death-disease, most desperate-like



## WYCKOFF

Of man's society ; needs antidote  
None less, though health be palpably at fault  
In pitying with sheer healthiness' recoil  
(As mountain-stream froth'd for the sewer's fear)  
Fever that for the victim's feverishness  
Seems scarce self-pitiable at the worst.  
Craves health or illness febrifuge none less  
(Street's putrefaction, purifying still)  
To minister, to mouth till ease obtain.  
For by default of worse disease, what worse  
Extremity can be for health-redress ?  
Miserable, or scarce miserable so much  
As by my preconceived impulsive plot,  
Failure none less ; no possibility  
Of mine appreciation, real insight  
By Christ-assumption : nor no antidote,  
No mission and no duty through the world !  
Nay, yielding some least feasibility  
That sweating, toiling ; even the memory weak  
Of one-time independence and mine ease  
(Yon black, oblivious of the torrent-spume) ;  
All expectation of triumphant burst  
(Anticipant gravitation seaward) wide  
Abroad in proselyting of the earth ;

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

All sense of difference in real degree  
'Twixt mine, my soul promoting proxihood  
For enterprise of ethical import  
And this my mean assumed estate : destroy'd  
(Source both and ocean-solace damm'd) ; at last  
I were by stultification in all sort  
Reduced to just the appropriate preconceived  
Or ill-conceived brute proletariat : —  
Where then the proof's experiment (what stream  
For city's imaging nor purge ?) ; wherein  
Were I other than him I seem and were,  
No-Christ but Pharisee, the actual crude  
Muscle-mass (stagnant pool, miasmic, stench'd  
As any) worst in want of aid indeed ;  
No purge, nor comfort, vicar, nor no God ;  
But just that man, that man-made-brute whose city  
Loses, by gaining me, all hope through me  
Of purification. — By profoundest proof  
Of perfect proxihood, no proof at all,  
No proxihood, no vicarage. —

I fail, then,

Avow the failure : sheer experiment  
But truth-annihilation in so far  
As actual approximation's gain'd.

## WYCKOFF

And with the plausible experiment  
Goes worth of any insight, power assumed  
Of adequate information imaging  
In my fact any other. For my fact  
Is stream and shall be stream, swirl'd ne'er so  
                  strait

Through city's boundaries. And all attempt  
By eddy, whirlpool to assimilate  
Shows but a self-denial, self-distraught  
Admission of the ultimate nothingness,  
Nescience, non-insight, non-criterion,  
Denial of all duty, right and law,  
Abandonment of world-community  
For pure exclusion'd self-identifying,  
Indifferent alive or dead. And lest  
The proxihood (pool clogg'd and choked to the brim)  
Get hold on me; and my Gethsemane  
Mark end at last of every high resolve  
In sheer subdual to the murk I'd mould:  
Be one resolve, last, best a man may make —  
True to the primal self-identity  
Of finite individual lapsingness,  
The nescience and the lawless entity,  
The lovelessness, the helplessness: one step,

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

One cast of body : and this life's soul-death  
Is done ! Firmly I fling: and shall be done ! —

One stark recoil ! — Done ? Can this life-in-death  
Have value, that the dismal death in the stream  
Should prompt revolt, create the new resolve  
By ultimate reaction, absolute  
Soul-estimation of the world ? What though  
This body, wash'd and rotting in the tide  
Disintegrate but toward and through new life,  
Chemic, bacterial, vegetative, man's  
Anew, or not man's, piecemeal, yet eterne  
By process ? What though this self-conscious soul  
Cease not, but swoon in the throes with ne'er an end,  
Being self-criterion of endurance (even  
As yon stream, being but stream, was yet some snow,  
Shall be some ocean ; though, for stream as stream,  
Stream still unendingly) ? What though being-done,  
By science or philosophy alike,  
Stands proved impossible inanity ?  
'T is yet this self-endurance, each least jot  
Of multiple manifold redundancy,  
The wide determinism interminable  
Whose each new tittle — stone uplift and stirr'd —

## WYCKOFF

Has absolute value and soul-vicarage.  
Ay, each least finite contrast (the swept stream  
Incapable of cityship, yon town  
Self-imperturbable to seawardness)  
Holding at heart, subtending inmost-wise  
An ultimate union through reality,  
Value, omniscience infinitely whole  
By being but irremediably distinct  
(Stream but by city-contradiction; town  
By being no-stream) still self-identified  
Each in and through all others totally.

Experiment's success ? — Experiment  
Was absolute, perfected, in and through  
Each failure of the proxihood; this soul,  
Not by inanity of mutual merge,  
Purity of adoption self-denied,  
But by development new day by day  
Of intimate contrast, rich complexity  
Of mine impossibility but through  
Distinction, whence — not self-abandoning  
All nature, but of absolute insight  
(As they through me, I through the soul of them)  
Original and natural — at last

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Physician, Christ-creator from the first. —  
Nescience by ultimate delusiveness?  
Nay, but by mediate delusiveness  
(And mediation, imaging, yon flare  
In the whirlpool, stands final delusion save  
Delusion-recognized, so absolute truth)  
Distinctively the self-world-conscience shows  
Truth unto truth, and no bewilderment.  
Discouragement? — This militant world-soul  
Of mine (yon river ceaselessly at sweep)  
But by ambition endlessly to learn  
More intimately, more complexly proved  
The richness and the sociology  
Of soul-original transcendent sight,  
Stands soul at all: and confident by doubt,  
Constant assured by utmost skepticism,  
Proves true the proxihood, experiment's  
Success: and shall make proselyte my world!  
I, toiler best by best philosophy:  
Vicar, Christ-guardian by love-unioning  
In soul-experiment, stirring stones all  
(Proving the stone self-stirr'd by world-whole stir):  
Scarce by mere stiffening of this callous'd palm,  
Scarce by endeavor to be brute — (what brute?) —

## WYCKOFF

But by the duty, mission, right conceived  
Of work's infinity in serving so  
Conscience, omniscience, God-society !

Such, for triumphant strength of twilight doubt  
Ultimate, doubt-defeating. — The strong noon  
Shall prove again experiment's despair.

## NANSEN

' MID ice and night onward and onward : ice,  
Night unresisted heaving on and on  
Though motiveless yet mightily my life  
In passion of the pack ; pressing on, on  
From nought through nought : no progress : passage  
proved

Prison ; persistence, powerlessness : or Pole  
Or no Pole, equal impotence ! — In patience  
My soul sees, even in impotence, fulfill'd  
The prophecy that built, equipp'd, launch'd forth  
Her foresight. Yea ; this power, this thrust and stress  
At bend and burst broad, loud below in the bleak,  
My heart holds ; comprehends ; conclusively  
Bursts beyond, thrusts down, down and bounds above  
In freedom of buoyancy. My ship, my soul  
Are motive ; are sun and strength beyond aught here !

Passion and patience of the universe,  
Doom'd to this dead, eternal ice and night !  
From nought through nought and nowhere any end ;  
No bourne to passage, strength to patience none ;  
Motive to life nor any life save death :



## NANSEN

Moon, and these myriad stars moon-dead to-be ! —  
Yet : what of This that knows, that wills an end,  
This God-I-Am : for whom, through whom, in whom  
Alone are ice and night and anything :  
This strength-of-suffering, power of life-through-death ;  
Prophet, transcendence of the darkness here ?  
Something, through uttermost of ice and night,  
Will that I question fact ; unfelt before  
Somewhat essential beyond ice or night  
Questions the doom ; demands, if there be life  
In me and through me, how may death persist,  
Ice and night so entomb earth's truth to-be ?  
World ceases not though I cease or not cease !  
What of world's soul that comprehends ; concludes  
Together nought with nought ; proves passage, bourne ;  
Chaos yet cosmos, sentient-systeming :  
Moon-dearth but sensible by strength of sun ;  
Strength endless, being criterion of end ?  
What of the Self to science' selflessness :  
Spirit to substance of world's ice and night ? —  
Hegel or Kelvin ? Kant with Christ or — what ? —  
Lo ! in this bitterly blank night, the breeze  
Blistering this breast to bleak frigidity ;  
Here above bellowing ice-blocks, stark aloft

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

At masthead 'mid these thorn'd tormenting stars,  
This vinegar, this mockery of moon :  
Must I alone this hour sweat through this passion  
Of intellectual agony made mine ;  
Wrestle, resolve (so crucified my soul  
Vicar for this dumb-arctic eloquence)  
World's problem of perpetuance, of power :  
In truth's name how an universe can be ! —  
I, so be intellect for deaf and dead,  
Savior for snows that scarce can think or speak,  
Christ for the ice and night : to prove for these  
Philosophy or science, faith or fact : —  
Conclusion foregone that I speak as Christ  
Speaking their self best in this self of mine,  
Speaking myself best in the self of these :  
By sympathy a faith — not selfless fact :  
An intellectual-conscience, scarce machine !

Yet, it is new, this union ; till this hour  
Unrealized ; till this night precluded quite  
By full acceptance of the selfless fact,  
Sheer science : Kelvin, Huxley ! — Christ or Kant  
Left out of count now, first the formal, fair  
Rehearsal of the fact ! —

## NANSEN

To clutch a shroud ;  
Shake with the strong wind streaming ; ramp and rock  
With sufferance of the vessel shock'd ; upheaved  
With every blasting of the bleak below.  
'T is to be fact for facts ; be buffeted  
As block beats block ; be wail'd-on by the wind.  
Above, the boreal auroras ; broad  
Beyond, about, below, the bleak, blown packs  
Sunless as senseless. To be one of these.  
Ay : and how comes it to be one of these ?  
Review the history, sum up the law  
Of evolution, nebula to now :  
The progress such and such ; geogeny,  
Biogeny, psychogeny ; the chain  
From nebula to now : and every new  
Born out of old. And flesh, this organ'd mass  
Nerved, sinew'd draws descent direct, distinct  
From nebula ; is substance as the stars,  
Substance as ice and night : and one with these.  
Ay, though be ice, night, moon, but equally  
With sunshine, quickening vapor metaphor  
For death or life : their real identity  
Nor death nor life, but force, fate : yet are these —  
The less, the more — equal inanity.

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Of fact's necessity : ' Self ', one of these ;  
Phenomenon of nerve-phenomena,  
Some sheer spontaneous sentience of a ' world '  
Was not, nor shall be : actual world none less,  
Indifferent, independent, nerve or nought :  
Intelligence or non-intelligence  
Indifferent to existence of the fact.  
Ay, this ' world-overweighting ' of the brain,  
This ' passionate, transcendent ponderance  
' Of soul ', this critical compendiousness  
Of ' mind ' o'er matter, ' Christhood ', ' vicarage ',  
This ' saviorship of union'd intellect  
' Its agonied redemption ', were but beats  
Of the ganglion, nerve-tissued blow on blow,  
Shaking and surging of the plasmic cells  
At sweat and ramp and rage of bursting blood ;  
This ' God-I-Am ' some subtlest ice or night  
Blow for blow, burst for burst the same in sort  
As bellowing ice-pack and this boreal blast :  
Nerve, native as the nebula : no-soul !  
Such are the facts to test and find them true ;  
No link disjuncted : perfect in the proof.  
And, for the logic of all law is such  
Must man with world come to the doom at last —

## NANSEN

Kelvin's and Huxley's — with the spent machine :  
With tendence moonward from the might of stars :  
Space-dissipation of world's energy  
To ice and night, no meaning. From the first  
Even this surge from nebula to now  
Nought but a space-dissemination, loss  
Of energy potential kinetized  
Toward equilibrium : equilibrium  
But nothingness, no force, non-end inane :  
Moon, nought save shown in sloth of swooning  
sun.

And if, in such dissemination, 'soul'  
(Nice nerve-vibration) over and beyond  
The grosser substance chemical gain growth  
And power organic over and beyond  
The less-organic ; stands the law the same :  
Such and such from the nebula to now  
Mere evolution of the nerve from vague  
Chaos through energy kinetic, sun  
And star and sphere on sphere, through molten  
mass,  
Rock-metal, vegetation, sinew'd flesh  
To man's brain : and from now back, back to night,  
Cold crystalline benumbing up of nerve

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

In cosmical pulsation : now from man  
Back to chill'd coalescence organless,  
Lifeless conglomeration : ice and night! —  
Ha ! the stars stab ; the bellowing below  
Mocks to the marrow ! Unto ice and night  
Dedicate nerve's destruction ! Now, to-night  
(What of the years of the world if years yield  
nought?)

Now, to-night end all ; headlong to the doom  
Dash on the blank pack's bosom : far below  
Beat brain out : end the agony ! In name  
Of Kelvin, Huxley, now, to-night I leap :  
Anticipate, make mine the doom of all ! —

Mine ? Mine the doom of all ! I hesitate ;  
Hold breath ; breathe deep this agony of air :  
Make it my blood and feel it mine ! I am !  
Life is what means it to be one of these ! —  
Alive, I-am ; nebula, nerve or night :  
Necessitating future still as past  
More and more, past as future, each in each !  
World ceases not : nor I cease. World I am ! —  
And it is new, this union : yet by will  
To end all proved, made perfect endlessly

## NANSEN

In intellectual action: Christ with Kant! —  
Faith for the facts! Feel faith and find fact truth!

This logic of life-origin, this law  
Of link'd necessity? Can link by link  
Interminably link'd explain one life?  
Mere mutuality, one molecule  
Save as the mutual mean identity:  
My life, or molecule, an union'd world?  
Ay; in such sort: if just this self of me —  
God-mechanician to their made machine,  
Else unmechanic mere nonentity! —  
Hypothesized yet unexplain'd remain  
(Hardly residuum, scarce for fact beyond)  
Still for true source, being synthesis, of these,  
Conscience and explanation, linkage, law —  
(Sunlike to shrinkage of moon soulless else!) —  
Not cause, yet all-causation; through and through  
Immanence and intelligence of all  
Else lawless, linkless, unionless, inane:  
Self-ideality of each-through-each;  
Each for itself forselfness even as I,  
Identified in me as selfhood all:  
The molecule in man, man-molecule,

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Native reality : and only so  
Real at all, molecule or man, for me :  
Past, future, none less instant, self for self,  
Real union, sentience each ; though yet for me  
Polar, unmeaning save as union'd now.  
Ay ; that I am, I am : all else in me  
(As I in them, through them, by mutual proof —  
How else, conceived empirics-error, save  
World's self-assertion, countervail'd to mine,  
In so far forth show Self neutrality ?)  
Through me make mutuality of self  
Distinct, determinate, dividual  
Yet individual universally.  
All that I am, I am : this world of mine ;  
This universe : alive by saviorship,  
(Monad or motive) Christhood-vicarage !  
Development proved world-dissipation proves  
By world-retort a false criterion,  
Half-standard contradictory : proves worth  
Of absolute process, progress regressive  
In pure polarity self-reconciled  
Evolving, mind from matter, most from least.  
Law, from the nucleus to now, but time  
Of self's maturing : ever to mature :



## NANSEN

Even in the space-dissemination, time's  
Ingathering of momentum ; human mind  
O'er mental nebula progressive still  
In mutual internality of lore  
Even as o'er physical man the molecule  
Nebular stood, still stands preëminent  
In property material of force  
Extern, displacement substantive ; alike  
Materio-mental, least and most : one Soul  
Erst nebular, now nebular-humane ;  
Ubiquitous, being all-self spatialized ;  
Eternal, being all-temporality :  
Mine erst, mine now, mine still eternal-wise ;  
By perpetuity through passingness  
(This perfectness of process) nebula, yea,  
To now, yet now by being but nebular  
(Past and to-come but poles of permanence) :  
Eternally my universe humane ! —  
Is it, world-mutuality may end ?  
Yet mutual how, save well aware through each,  
Alive each molecule — that may not end,  
Being each for self criterion of end,  
World-mutuality in self alone ? —  
Ice and night, ' ice ' and ' night ' (man's metaphor

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

For end-unmeaning, dead) but humanly ;  
Ice yet for ice, night yet for night, humane  
In selfhood nebular-molecular :  
Moon yet for moon, as sun for sun, one world —  
(Transcending metaphor) each molecule ! —  
Union'd, processional unendingly —  
Soul not above, beyond ; but immanent  
Self-reference, intelligence through all !

Lo ! for behalf of such as scarce may speak,  
Lo ! for life's ice and night, life laughs at loss :  
Takes truth from lightning of the blank below :  
Spurns space-dissemination : in despite  
Turns law to law's impassion'd intellect  
Proved in performance of my ship, my soul  
Their prophecy, foresighted impotence !  
Lo ! proved in the patience under pressure, power  
Of passive Pole-persistency (extreme  
Passion of logic push'd to point), behold  
Motived preëminence of manhood-plan  
O'er potency less mental ; o'er the bleak  
Ice and night I for vicar proving world  
Processive, though pulsation'd : I by proof  
Lifting the lost to life's intelligence ;

## NANSEN

Fact-science to philosophy by faith.  
What of the equilibrium, inane  
Frosting of nerve to nothingness? By pace  
Equal, if opposite, above, beyond  
The physical degeneration steps  
The 'psychic' subtlety: nor moon nor star  
Shows soul-futurity, save star or moon  
In spirit equal-born! — And I north, north  
Push, overpower, soul-overweight their world  
Of space-passivity; their extreme verge  
Of sphere yet union'd Pole through Zone, yet proved  
Axial, self-orbited — being but motivated more  
Pass on the lamp of light, cramp boundaries,  
Burst and break down the barriers (limit proved  
Barrier but by bursting); limitless  
Lead on the more than human mind to-come  
In conquest of physic's frigidity:  
More and more conquer'd, spurn'd beyond, the more  
Frosted in deadness of new ice and night. —  
Ay; and in conquest more and more shall world  
(Or human or some supra-human nerve,  
Some more than nerve) by reconciling more  
More comprehend, include and lift to light  
The 'deadness' and the 'darkness': more and more

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Shall time to-come, immanent now, make now  
An explanation and intelligence  
By selfhood. — As my selfhood, savior now  
Springs forth in fire abroad, auroral, vast  
From stiffening of this Christhood on the cross  
Stark aloft ! From the vicarage complete  
(Torment of stars or mockery of moon :  
This intellectual agony made mine) ;  
Eternal principle of every end —  
Christ for the ice and night, redeeming these ! —  
For whom alone meaning or end may be :  
World-saviorship that shall not end ! —

I rave ?

Drunk with the drench of drouth, of death ? I  
freeze ? —

Ha ! the skies scoff ! I still am doom'd in dream :  
Man, with the dead-eternal ice and night.

## DREYFUS

NAY, I make no revolt ; accept the doom ;  
Drag on in desolate, deliberate death  
The life-imprisonment. No petulance,  
No desperation ; only an intent  
To realize utterly this miserable  
Incarceration, learn appreciate  
The bondage ; leave behind me here at death  
The written testimony, manuscript  
Of the judgeless punishment ; that world may know  
As I know, once for all, so shudder at,  
Assimilate and once for all forswear  
(As I in pure appreciation rise,  
In and through prisoning, beyond these bars  
To absolute freedom of contemplating)  
This horrible denial, vital void.

I have come through the whirlwind and am calm,  
Calm as these stones and unremitting chains :  
Shall 'keep calm for the purpose to speak truth'.  
I make no plaint : even mine innocence  
Absolute of the charge preferr'd upon me  
Seems scarce to irritate, exasperate

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Since the first bitterness of fierce turmoil,  
Nor lure to loss of sanity. I but  
Feel the more fully, may be, more abhor  
The manner of my condemnation. Were I  
But guilty as I now am innocent  
Were uttermost abhorrence mine the same  
As justly and as innocently 'gainst  
Their absolute non-justice, disregard  
Of any innocence or guilt of mine.  
Though for the sake of this my narrative  
Its prima facie evidence of truth,  
Good faith, trustworthiness, I still am glad,  
Take pride in innocence ; yet aggravate  
My scorn, my self-transcendence of the doom  
No whit because they work'd worse than they knew.  
I'll not suppose they thought me innocent :  
The imputation of malignancy  
Is supererogatory. I maintain  
But that mine innocence nor guilt at all  
Bore weight in the matter, influenced the course  
Of condemnation in the least degree.  
There lies the blame, the worse than blackest blot  
My soul can well conceive. On them I lay  
Bloodguiltiness of total disregard

## DREYFUS

For right nor wrong ; pursuance right or wrong  
Of one hypothesized and prejudiced  
Supposed essential policy : the case  
Nowise in question ; the one dogma, all.

First, can prejudgment of one policy  
To be pursued, regardless for whate'er  
Of new may yet eventuate, constitute  
By force of supreme faith its final right  
In the conscience of its agent and absolve  
Agent from any blame or merit else ?  
Not so. I hold that certainly one faith,  
To be sure, one self-ideal of a life  
Guides each his action, nor can be escaped  
By any subterfuge : evasions even  
Serving but subtlier, more pervasively  
So to develop and define the law  
(Covering all exceptions utterly)  
Of being and one's ultimate self-world.  
Yet is such over-soul, transcendent union  
No dogma of some still-persistent end,  
No rule of specialist activity,  
But such immanent unity as through  
The multiple, mutable particular rules

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Finds itself, is their universal self,  
Intrinsic unity : nowise prejudiced  
Hypothesis, persistent disregard  
For new experience ; but just the ground  
Of all experience, of new as old :  
And else were no instant self-certainty.  
So much for self-consistency. I claim  
That policy a perfidy toward self,  
Denial of the self-organic growth  
In freedom by necessity of point  
To point link'd mutual in evolving life,  
That policy the true self-perfidy  
Which posits truth on strange authorization  
And formal self-conviction once for all  
Immutable. The self-consistency  
(Monism of universal variance)  
Has vital basis ; scarce excuses vain  
Self-segregation from assimilation.  
Whence remains question, to be tried and proved  
In this my narrative for all the world :  
Whether or no (sanely and quietly, ay,  
As tranquil now) in so condemning me  
Regard to any innocence or guilt  
By way of evidence was properly



## DREYFUS

Admitted ; whether or no prejudgment of  
The cause precluded right or wrong throughout —  
Inquiry calling for unprejudiced  
Sifting of intricate procedure, which  
Examination of each act by act  
So far as I be not in ignorance  
Unfairly, misinform'd of real events  
Whose true report was due my perilment,  
Shall be my narrative through patient years  
Here 'mid these walls. But need not hinder now.

Secondly, of the systems which in the world  
Most stand for sheer prejudgment, disregard  
Of individual initiative,  
Persistence in one abstract policy,  
Represent, are expression of a pure  
Obliviousness to actuality  
Of self-conviction ; which require the most  
Self-perfidy by policy pursued  
Rigidly exoteric in the rule  
Laid down by strange authority, I claim  
The militar bureaucracy, their system  
Of outworn mediæval ordering  
Stands worst and most outrageous. Can the man

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Commission'd and authoritative, else  
Outrank'd, owning allegiance, be excused  
From charge of selling birthright, soul and all ?  
Conceive the underling, the slave who stands  
For puppet, prisoner of superior  
Official and commission'd overlord ;  
Drill'd, train'd by sheer reiteration to  
Come, go at bidding ; kill if need be ; scarce  
Of independence and intelligence  
To breathe by self-direction : in so far  
As man may utterly renounce his worth  
Absolved from all responsibility,  
All moral fibre ; made a mere machine,  
Automaton : best soldier, the worst man.  
Nor that there are in the world men who, save slaved,  
Were wild, obstreperous, dangerous to their kind  
(Deserving dungeon as I merit none)  
Makes medal'd orderly nor cow'd poltroon  
Better than galley-slave : who first renounce  
(For lust of crime or lust of pay, what care ?)  
All further rights of new experience,  
All possibility to profit by  
New stimulus toward new intelligence ; to  
Evolve as individual, unversed

## DREYFUS

Man-of-a-world and actual entity.  
Nay, that the stultification somewhat fails  
Of innermost completeness but implies  
Impossibility of mechanism :  
Reflects no credit on the scheme which fails.  
Courage with ready, reason'd action comes  
Scarce of the soldier-element : remains  
Residuum of the man not quite crush'd out.  
And for the overlord, commissioner  
In so far as not underling the same  
To some outranking in authority,  
'T would seem at first sight as though most of man  
Remain'd uncrush'd, just by the exercise  
Of uttermost authority self-will'd.  
Yet in the superposed authority  
Regardless of all self-initiative  
(Save brainless flesh-instinctive ritual)  
In the rank and file, springs real self-perfidy  
Subtler, so more pernicious, worse abhorr'd  
Than sheer automatism. For such will  
Were merely will, sheerly the emptiness  
Of indeterminate and self-estranged  
Prejudgment. Every item for such law —  
Pure overposited by fiatism,

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Purely a puppet, of generic type  
An instance merely and no fact at all  
To be accounted with and reconciled —  
Lacks world-reality, stands sheerly for  
The overlord's subjectivism (these stones'  
Regardlessness of innocence) no live  
Ideal actuality, no truth.

Whence are all actions of such governance  
(Wanting reality of govern'd selves)  
Actions to no end of self-actual world,  
No whole self-realization ; but denial  
Of self's reality, self-governance.

Whence the commander, despot rigidly  
By preconceived, so unadjustable  
And inorganic fiat, worst of all men  
Forswears the self-world-organism, is most  
Incapable, in all that touches him  
As soldier, of an actual manliness ;  
Most like machine when most authoritative,  
Most judgmentless (most like these worldless walls)  
When dooming most, when most court-martial judge.  
And that some humanhood remains to these  
By failure of the system quite to quench  
Mutual regard for men's reality

## DREYFUS

Of independent soul-initiative  
Shall scarce excuse the system which still fails.

Whence am I righteously (no blame of theirs)  
Doom'd as by plenum of accomplish'd fate  
To destiny, deplorable enough,  
Deserved of any man who earnestly  
And faithfully as may be serves, supports  
The military system ; who at last  
By very innocence of all offense  
Charged in indictment 'gainst the monstrous scheme,  
By very militar trustworthiness  
(As I an officer was trustworthy  
As stones and chains are somewhat trustworthy)  
Realizes self best by this judgmentless  
Oblivion of responsibility  
For right nor wrong. I had the less deserved  
This desolateness had my manhood less  
Been soldierly. — I, realizing at last  
Soul's absolute self-responsibility,  
Prologuize narrative (of soul's worst wrong  
Men e'er committed) with confession full :  
In so far as I served and did command  
Trustworthily am I deservingly

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Victim of mine old mediæval zeal,  
My monkish segregation self from world  
Imposing an imposed authority  
As martinet, disciplinary chief  
To the death. Confess, mine innocence of all  
Charges preferr'd against me for worst crime  
Imputable: and shall in all I say  
Damning their disregard for right nor wrong  
Damn by each jot and tittle of my proof  
Of innocence myself to living death,  
This desolate existence: righteously.

So in the narrative I rise beyond  
The degradation, realize utterly —  
Since that first bitterness of mad turmoil  
Transfiguring, regenerating all —  
Absolute freedom of contemplating  
The terms of this my life-imprisonment:  
Teaching the world (save in their zeal the guards —  
That one last loss which scarce will leave me sane! —  
Obliterate this written testimony!)  
Men's horrible denial, vital void;  
This manlessness which is their martial law!

## TESLA

A LIFE-TIME vow'd to service of mankind!  
Here 'mid these marvel-working manifold  
Automata, built of my brain and strength,  
To labor to increase man's energy!  
Ay, not to human weal alone, but all  
Earth's is the service dedicate; for, though  
Human activity must needs exploit  
Subhuman, subhumanity none less  
Gains as the world at large by every new  
Economy of practice: energy  
Of all earth more effective by each least  
Subtler adjustment of the mechanism.  
All earth a mechanism, whatsoe'er  
Axes or fulcra; molecules or minds  
Alike one reservoir of fluid force  
Unstable, by whose instability  
Is mankind measurable. I, a man,  
But an automaton of vital force  
Directing by mine energy supreme  
Of subtlest-sure adjustments world's work all  
Through the self-dedication. In despite  
Of self-supposed originality,

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Illusive independence; just because  
Of mechanism-leadership, most subtly  
A full-felt world-dependence; am I most  
Machine, axis and fulcrum in this world!

Is this thing so? Am I this world-machine? —  
Yea, for these many years I've swiftly work'd  
Of this one guide and standard to my strength:  
The more machine-like, so ideally  
The more myself; the more this heart and brain  
Conceive and execute automata,  
The more myself realizes for the world  
A genuine worldship. Such the mass; and such  
The swiftness, such the motion: wherefore such  
The mundane energy! Thus have I wrought,  
Thus-wise believing. And, by work's success  
Even in its sort, proved my philosophy  
Of practical purport and sufficient thus  
To truth. So have I held; and still hold so.  
Yet though in this present pause from labor's stress,  
In this unprecedented need to weigh  
Well the world-worth of this my way of life,  
Springs an enthusiasm, yea, a zeal  
For just such course as hitherto pursued;



## TESLA

Yet in excess of zeal justly demands,  
Ay, strangely preconceives, prejudices, ay,  
An ultimate criticism, evaluation  
Of my belief's foundations. Face to face  
Start forth enthusiasm, soul-profound,  
Soul-overwhelming ; ay, and to its face  
A sudden void of all which had seem'd proof,  
A sudden need to prove anew a scheme  
Wherein enthusiasm, valuing,  
Self-judgment, criticism, have their place  
For all-important. — Can the mere machine  
Be less mechanic for a blank despair ?  
Have or despair or faith a meaning through  
Automata ? And yet faith and despair  
Are fundamental. I am fill'd with faith,  
Faith which but by supreme self-confidence  
Demands establishment. In that despair  
Which was mine for the fiery element  
(Resuming locally an outlived past  
Insensate of nebular immanence ?)  
Which in an hour did lay waste all my work  
Of decades ; in that sudden-sprung dismay  
(At loss of cosmic process and contact  
Too retrograde with force unfrigerate ?)

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Was nought of energy, no moving force,  
No force-moved mass : the dedication, ceased ;  
Stopp'd, the world-service. This automaton,  
Call'd work, quite disestablish'd ; man or mind,  
Axis or fulcrum shatter'd ; in despite  
Of universal energy (that keen  
Condition of the first mass-birth) despair  
Immeasurable and immitigable  
Of this one personal estimate did end  
The mechanism. In that hour I sat  
Of a smoking, ashen, soul-denuded world ;  
Which by the very world-essential soul  
Of me (my blank despair) proved so no world.  
Now is the world of this self-dedicate  
Enthusiasm reestablish'd ; yea,  
Scarce by dependence upon heat or cold ;  
Not by an automatic world-device  
Of mechanism ; but by world-design,  
New zeal inrushing over all the void :  
World rehabilitate by virtue of  
This personal estimate new-vitalized.  
Can such a world whose being so depends  
On faith, non-being on a mere despair,  
Be mechanism ? Can the self be given

## TESLA

Wholly to mankind's service, nor thereby  
But subtler, richlier serve this personal sense  
Of value, paramount and lord of all ?  
Ha ! What my mere machines (analogous  
With men's souls, but not thereby men !) must needs  
Lack, is this manufacturing soul-self ;  
Which not alone mechanically makes,  
But knows : ' I make ; and, knowing so, transcend  
' All mechanism '. Ha ! and this my soul  
(Analogous with such automata,  
But not thereby mechanic) actualizes  
Self, both, and world-mechanics by best being  
Not a world-dedication, but a stuff  
Which knows : ' I dedicate and by this sense  
' Alone am world-devoted '. So shall zeal  
Establish zeal ; insistently maintain  
Mechanics which alone were mechanism  
By fundamental faith. Else were despair  
Indifferent ; world indifferent, work or nought.  
Else were the fiery destruction, no  
Undoing ; nor the work evaluable.  
Else were world-service utterly inane.

So, to the reconstruction. Whilst I work

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Still at the old mechanics, to conceive  
World for a self-world, so conceive the scheme  
Of service as to show the work in sooth  
Auto-energetic : ay, no longer but  
Postponement of world's sheer devitalizing.  
For I have dream'd and taught that all my work  
Aim'd at postponement of the inevitable  
Infrigeration ; sought economy  
Merely of dissipation with a view  
To eking-out what energy remains  
From the more wasteful methods. I have sought  
Decrease destruction in opposing war  
With war's mechanics push'd to limit of  
Conceivable effectiveness ; thereby  
With horror of catastrophe to cow  
The blustering militance. This have I done  
Toward mass-economy, postponing time  
Of final destitution. I have sought  
By chemic subtlety to fertilize  
Barrenness to a cropping, that mankind  
At far less waste than of his flocks and herds  
Might live by bread unto remoter years :  
Postponing sure starvation. I have sought  
Far beyond all else so to utilize

## TESLA

Sun's energy remaining best by forcing  
Electric instability, to use  
Earth for one vast elastic reservoir  
Of fluid potency ; by setting up  
Local disturbances at least expense,  
To energize with practical potency  
For warmth, food, shelter, vitality or strength  
As needed every molecule of earth  
Without molecular destruction : yet  
Admitting how inevitably must  
Practical worth of molecules (if not  
By deepest definition matter's self ?)  
In the wellnigh interminable course  
Of dissipation thus electrically  
Set up, be slowly, fatally none less  
Exhausted. For, howe'er device may aim  
Toward fostering inequilibrium  
Of potencies, must every transformation  
To energy mechanical set up  
A kinematic equilibrium ;  
In so far irretrievably exhaust  
The potency. Thus in a sort my work  
Has seem'd a self-defeat ; a weak attempt  
(However by comparison immense)

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Toward mere postponement of an evil day  
Inevitable ; and an end of life,  
Nowise disbarr'd. And in mechanic scheme  
Must whatsoe'er economy but be  
Relative to preceding waste ; none less  
Modicum of exhaustion, dissipation  
Proceeding still, if temporarily  
New wealth yet unexploited open up  
Delusive vista ; or if, for direct  
Acknowledgment of waning, earlier wants  
Be strictly curtail'd. Such has been my work  
Acknowledging a self-defeat, devoting  
Self to a general and still foredoom'd  
Lost cause, forlorn hope without source of hope.  
Such were a mere mechanics self-destroy'd.

Now but the mechanism proves to need  
A self-establisher ; and equally  
Possesses such. World-work is self-sustain'd.  
Devotion is of zeal and faith ; the self  
Ever more richly realized in the work  
World-dedicate ; and nowise in such work  
Susceptible to any self-defeat.  
What of this world, which, being world of self,

## TESLA

Mechanics auto-vital, self-sustain'd,  
Cannot, whatso the dedication, still  
In dedication suffer self-defeat ?  
What of a world of faith, self-consciously  
A work and an evaluating of work ?  
Were my works wrong ? Were there no value in  
Civilization, ever earning more  
By less comparative of waste ? Or were  
Such effort valuable, reason-right,  
Definable in any terms at all,  
Just because over and above the work  
Is valuation : consciousness and faith ?  
Man cannot live by bread alone ; man's wars  
Shall cease but for disgust — at worst, dismay —  
Which enginery (putting-aside from self  
Destructiveness) may mean : not enginery  
(Pride in a pompous, loud ingeniousness)  
Be war's cessation ; and 't were zeal for work  
In work's enlarged horizon which my skill  
Shall kindle : not the work-fact, but the joy  
In estimated process skill-sustain'd.  
Such were solution. I deny no whit  
The perfect-proved mechanical dismay  
Which fronts us ; from the first every least act —

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Defined mechanicwise for physical  
Equilibration of some potency —  
Has been and still shall be self-dissipant,  
Doom'd to destruction, still degenerating  
Despite all ingenuity ; and so  
Unthinkable for any world of faith,  
Enthusiasm or intelligence  
Of workmanship. So from the first has been  
Evaluation ; which through every stroke  
Of mass-in-motion more and more intends  
Purposive adaptation ; more and more  
Posits economy, by utterly  
Forswearing standard of economism  
For fundamental. Every motion-mass,  
Factors of energy, were such but by  
The estimation : 'I am mass and move '.  
Every dissemination, every fall  
Of energy toward equilibrium  
(In the cooling process of the fiery scheme)  
Stands register'd eternally, by more  
And more recomplication through and through  
The evaluation ; which, by every move  
And loss mechanic, waxes in design'd  
Enthusiasm, in the psychic strength



## TESLA

Of comprehension, organized, concrete  
Self-adaptation, self-devotion through  
Richlier a world of process, of a growth  
Equal to regress ; yet by nature of  
Growth by contrast with physical decay,  
Infinitely, ay, qualitative-wise  
Supremely of importance. Through and through  
Is world a scheme of matter-motived loss :  
Parallel'd, ay, in sure polarity  
Of meaning, by its equal counterpart,  
The psychic increase : as psychology  
Means growth ; so physics, dissipation ; and both,  
One static process. As all energy,  
Or wastefully, or by my subtlest scheme  
Economized, must dissipate (the mass  
Call'd man, move as a mass with less each hour  
Of physic-energy in flesh and brain)  
So must the zeal (if mass be possible  
Even for its own defeat) of comprehension,  
Enthusiastic teleology  
Of ordering estimate evaluate more  
And more unendingly. My whole work looks  
Ever toward richlier comprehending world  
In self ; toward organism (fleshly still

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

If fleshly less preponderant) which shall be  
As far beyond our present human frame  
As man excels the nuclear molecule  
Of star-stuff. As my world-intelligence  
Sprung from the nebula ; so springs, in just  
The same continuous frigeration, some  
More-than-man and some more-than-heat to hold  
System eternally : some less-than-heat  
With heat's evanishment indifferently  
To life's perpetuance. I in my purge  
By fiery holocaust, I in my sense  
Of world-habilitation totally  
Conclude an universe ; as molecule  
Of nebula concluded, still concludes  
Only less man-significantly such  
Eternal worldship. Every organism  
Chemic or supra-physiologic each  
Is perpetuity. Mine energy  
Of world is inexhausting, being a faith. —  
What possibility of after-life ?  
What meaning to expected end of all ?  
What worth to cyclic rhythm, counterpoise  
And energy exhausted ? These were mere  
Partial interpretation of work done

## TESLA

And so defined as ended, still foredoom'd !  
The worker were not done, still less foredoom'd  
Who is criterion of continuance !

What else were spirit than this zeal to work  
A self-salvation by my made machines  
Serving in sort my human world ? And yet  
More than this manifold and marvel-seeming  
Mechanic ingenuity were this :

' I make : and know ; and cannot foil my faith

' Which were criterion even of despair ;

' Eternity and continuity

' Even of the fiery purge, ashen defeat '.

So have I sought and found automaton ;

Auto-establisher through every stroke

Of world-dependent, man-devoted zeal.

Only by mass-transcendence might I mean

Mass, motion, energy : and I am these :

Original, creative, absolute

As any other among all mankind ! —

Nay, 't were insane ! Were not the fiery fact

Lord of despair, master of this machine,

Irrevocably proved, by mockery

Of mine illusive insight, from the first

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Creator and created ? Such defeat,  
As by too great success at calling back  
The obsolete incandescence, proves the world  
Unmeaning mass ; my faith or my despair  
Product — and only thereby factor too —  
In the world-energy. I feel and will  
(With far less vital zeal) but as a flame  
Devours : and ashens with its food's surcease.



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